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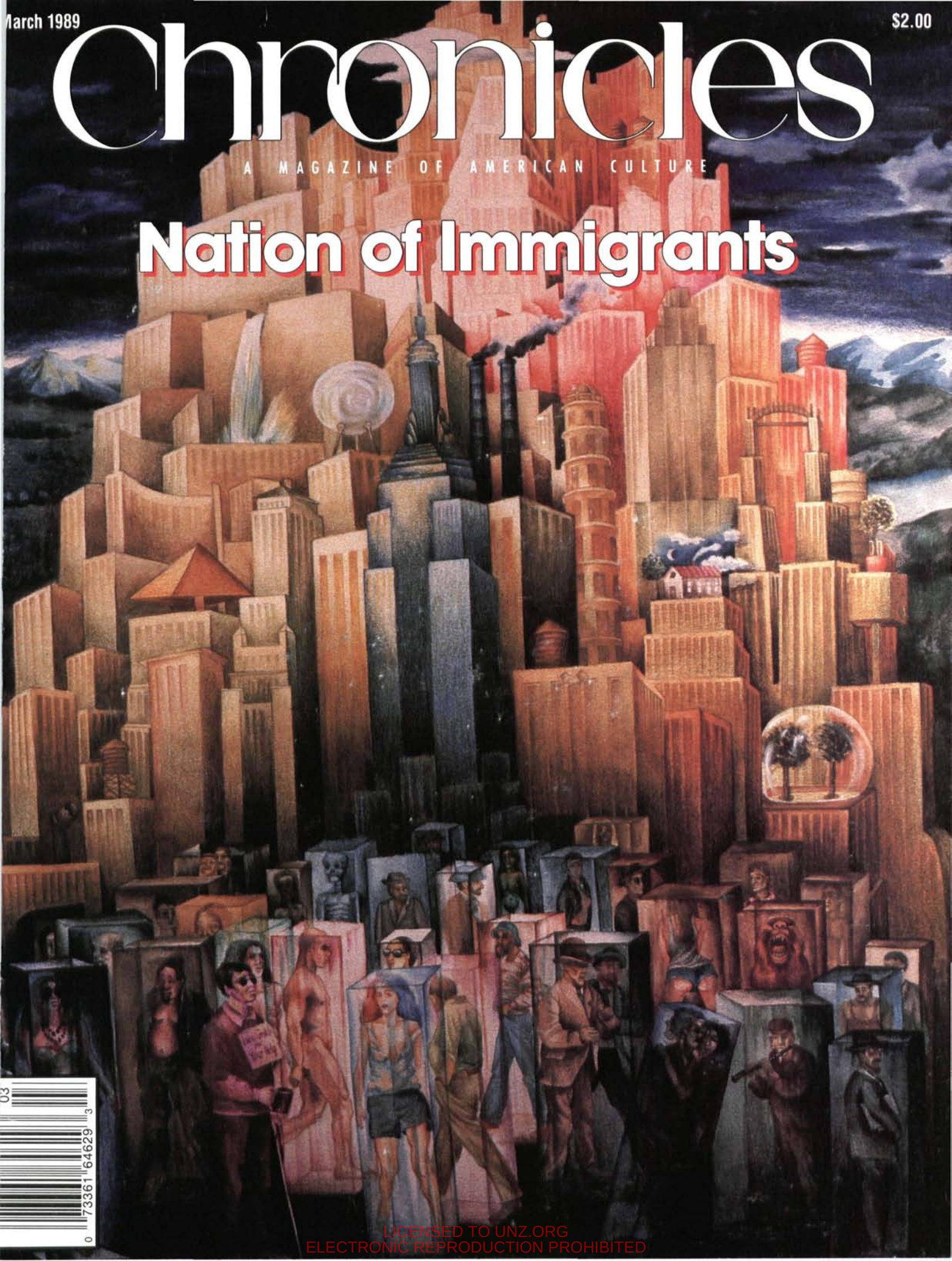
Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Nation of Immigrants



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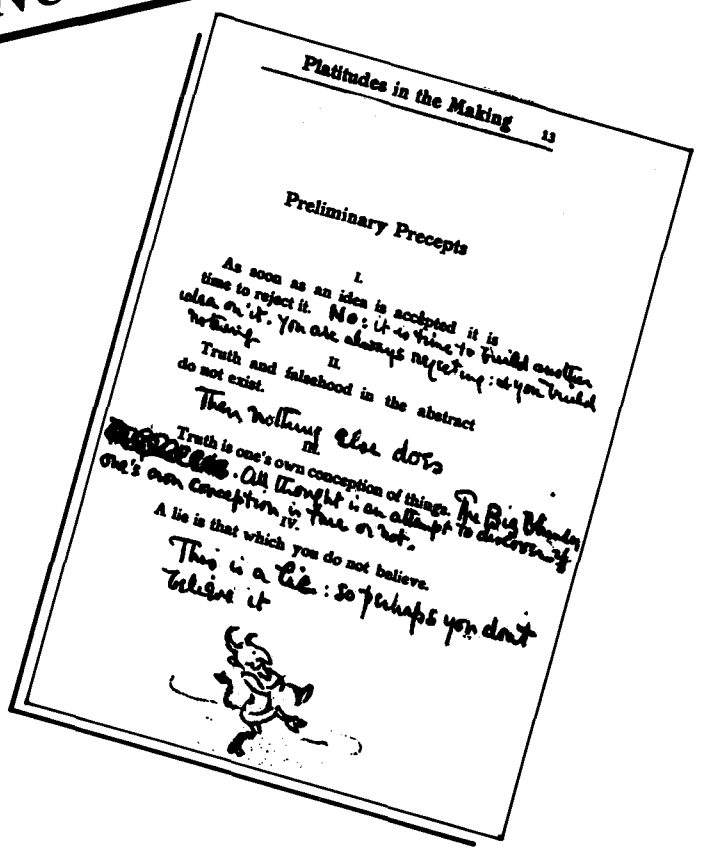
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Preliminary Precepts
I.
As soon as an idea is accepted it is time to reject it. No: it is time to build another idea on it. You are always rejecting: if you build nothing.
II.
Truth and falsehood in the abstract do not exist.
Then nothing else does
III.
Truth is one's own conception of things. The Big Words. All thought is an attempt to discover one's own conception is true or not.
IV.
A lie is that which you do not believe.
This is a lie: so perhaps you don't
think it

A Chesterton treasure has just been discovered in Paris: a presentation copy of Holbrook Jackson's book, *Platitudes in the Making* (1911) with Chesterton's answers to Jackson in the form of counter-aphorisms written in his own hand. A generous selection of these aphorisms will be published in the November, 1988, issue of the *Chesterton Review*.

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On 'Caudillo and Generalissimo'

Professor Lee Congdon merits applause for a thoughtful review of two books on Francisco Franco (October 1988). I might raise the point of a number of significant omissions, but this would be unfair. I do, however, take exception to one commission, namely the assertion that Federico Garcia Lorca was shot by the Nationalists in 1936.

This was the propaganda claim of the Loyalists in the early days of the Spanish Civil War, but it has never been substantiated in any way. In point of fact, all the evidence adduced to date points in the direction of a murder by a gang of toughs led by personal enemies of Garcia Lorca. In the early days of the Nationalist uprising, there were many instances of this kind of nonpolitical killing on both sides.

In Loyalist Madrid, a gang broke into the home of a distant cousin of my father, slaughtering him, his wife and children, and even his servants. The cousin was a physician and totally apolitical.

It should be added in any comment on Francisco Franco that he saved far more Jewish lives than any of the leaders of the West by restoring Spanish citizenship to the descendants of those driven out by the Inquisition, thereby allowing those in Central Europe to escape the death camps and take their property with them.

—Ralph de Toledano
Washington, DC

On 'Letter From the Heartland'

I would like to express how much I enjoy reading *Chronicles*, and particularly the "Letter From the Heartland" that Jane Greer writes.

But "Eastern Montana: a gigantic plate of congealed gravy"? Harsh words from Greer (December 1988), one of the unfortunate residents of North Dakota—the state where the interstate curves so that a driver won't fall asleep crossing the state's wide open sameness.

Some of the sights that the Greer family appear to have missed in their frenzy to get to and from the mountains:

—Ft. Peck Dam, the world's largest earth-filled dam.
—Museum of the Plains Indian.
—C.M. Russell Museum, the studio and art of the greatest cowboy artist.
—Makoshika State Park, with the beauty of the badlands in eastern Montana.
—Three separate Indian reservations, a chance to see socialism and your tax dollars at work.
—The missile silos of central Montana (it is difficult not to notice Montana's contribution to national defense).
—The beauty of eastern Montana, with its wide open spaces. The sense of individuality and humbleness in the face of such an immense and underpopulated area should at least touch a small part of the visitor who comes here with both eyes and mind open.

And in retaliation for the sheep joke, did you hear that North Dakota has bought five thousand septic tanks? As soon as they learn to drive them they're going to invade Montana.

—Brent Richlen
Miles City, MT

On 'Millions of Fathers'

The comments in your December issue about the anomaly of the laws, as now constituted, that affirm both the woman's sole right to decide on abortion *and* the father's duty to financially support the child once born were very well taken.

The fact is that abortion is *always justified* on the basis of the tacit assumption that the issue is one of pregnancy only. Since the only one affected by the condition of pregnancy is the woman—so the argument goes—she should be the only one to decide whether she wishes to continue being pregnant. The way this is expressed in a slogan is, "A woman has the right to control her own body." However, to assume that the main issue is pregnan-

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cy is totally dishonest. Except for a handful of cases, the woman is objecting not to the condition of pregnancy, but to the prospect of having a child. Everything testifies to this, including most of the reasons advanced for abortion: a child would interfere with my education, my career; I can't afford to support a child; I have too many children already; the child has been diagnosed as defective; it is the result of rape or incest. *It's the child the abortion is intended to get rid of,* not the pregnancy. Medical practice also testifies to this: if there were another condition that entailed the discomforts of even an unusually unpleasant pregnancy but that was guaranteed to clear up by itself in nine months, no doctor would feel a surgical procedure was justified to clear up the condition a few months sooner.

It is a contradiction to deny the father any say as to whether his child, the fetus, should continue to live or not, and then at birth suddenly acknowledge that he has the same relationship and responsibility for the child that the mother does. Where did this relationship suddenly come from if at conception nothing happened but a totally self-contained change in the condition of the woman's body? This break in the organic connection that used to tie the male to the family is, in my view, ominous. Such a break is what abortion laws, in denying the man any say in the matter, necessarily entail. Forcing the man to support a child after birth to whom he was denied any connection during the preceding nine months becomes merely an act of the legislature, based not on nature but on the legislature's arbitrary decision.

—Mrs. Richard M. Haywood
West Lafayette, IN

On 'Our Stumbling Giant'

Having served as a pastor and naval chaplain under the authority of the United Methodist Church, I can truly appreciate Robert Nisbet's comments concerning "Christian millennialism" (December 1988). Methodism and the National Council of Churches have stuffed that concept into the ears of their adherents at every opportunity.

I wish Mr. Nisbet had commented on the propaganda of the leftists in their exploitation of this "moralism," because the technique they employ is "moral blackmail." They look for violations of a target group's moral code, a violation that allows a behavior that impedes the advance of Marxism, and, while pointing the accusing finger, loudly cry "shame!"

This "moralism" has our chaplains going into combat without the means of self-defense, which is giving governmental endorsement of the pacifistic view as being morally right. Our hospital ships are caught in the same dilemma—should they be plainly marked, without defense, at the mercy of the enemy? When the moralists begin to dictate who shall give up his right to self-defense, these same moralists will also demand the nation give up its right of self-defense.

—Ernest S. Lemieux
CDR, CHC, USN Ret.
Tampa, FL

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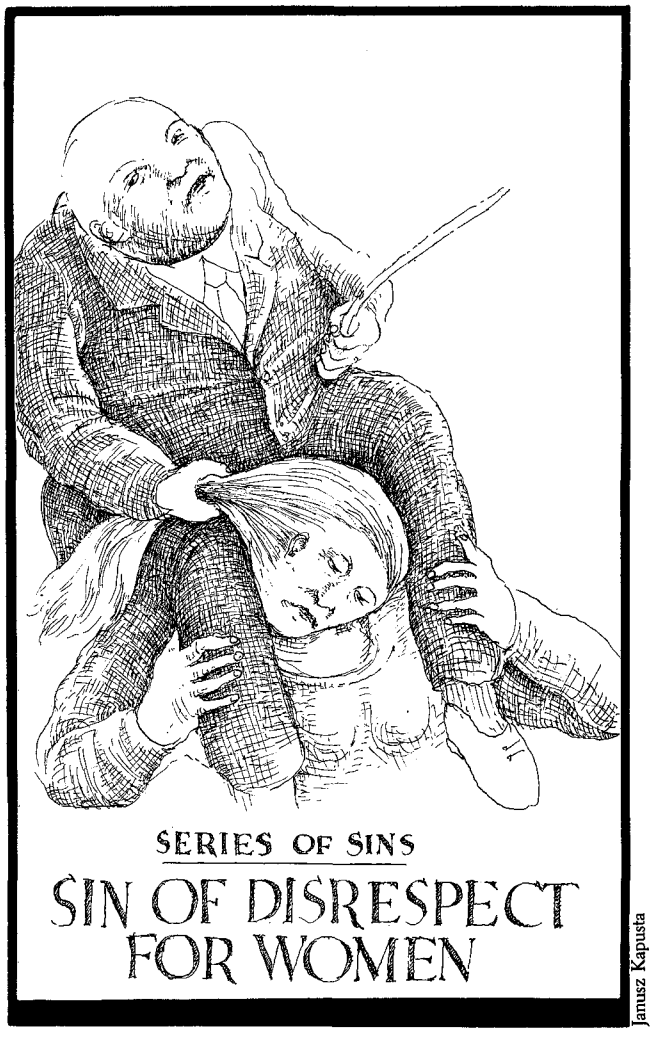
We inadvertently left out a photo credit for the picture of Pete Schaub in our January issue, page 46. The photo was taken by Jon Warren for The Seattle Times. *—The Editors*



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"GLOBALIZATION"—when did it become a central tenet of conservatism? According to Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead, it was in the New Deal era that the US "rejected isolationism and economic nationalism" in favor of the "globalization of our daily lives." The text of Whitehead's address to the September meeting of the Economic Policy Council of the United Nations Association was given wide circulation in December as a State Department policy paper on "Global Economic Integration." In his remarks, Whitehead praised "the distinguished men who shaped our international economic policy in the 1940s—people like Cordell Hull, Harry White, William Clayton and George Marshall."

The Reagan administration has spent a great deal of effort on behalf of global interdependence. That the President and his neoconservative foreign policy advisors drew their inspiration from Franklin D. Roosevelt is no secret. Mr. Reagan has said that he became a partisan of "free trade" in the 1932 election campaign, when FDR accused the Republicans of "causing" the Great Depression by adopting the Smoot-Hawley Tariff. Curiously, FDR's Smoot-Hawley myth has become a standard line for Reagan administration globalists, and Whitehead dutifully used it. That it has no grounding in fact or logic, that it was merely a charge in a negative campaign that made the Willie Horton issue look like the high road, has not stopped its endless repetition.

Smoot-Hawley went into effect in 1931, well after the Depression had started (the stock market had collapsed back in 1929). Its focus was agriculture, which had been depressed throughout the 1920's. The minor changes made in industrial policy were of no consequence. As America's foremost tariff expert Frank Taussig wrote at the time, "The new duties on manufactured goods were mostly of a petty sort. . . . On the important branches of these industries the protective system had already been carried so far that no considerable further displacement of imports could be expected." The historical truth is that the US had always used protective tariffs and had become the world's most powerful economy running perennial trade surpluses. Trade policy did not eliminate the business cycle—nothing can do that—but it did not cause it, either. It was the collapse of the banking system, not trade, that made the Depression so devastating.

It is disturbing when conservatives cannot come up with anything better than a half-century old Democratic campaign slogan to guide policy—especially when the country is in the midst of a techno-industrial trade war that will affect the worldwide distribution of production capacity well into the 21st century, with all that means for the international balance of wealth and power. But it is not the only disturbing element in Whitehead's talk, for among the "distinguished" men the deputy secretary mentioned was the traitor Harry White.

Better known by his full name, Harry Dexter White had taught international economics at Harvard before becoming an assistant secretary of the Treasury. He was the father of the World Bank and became director of the International Monetary Fund in 1946. He was also a Soviet agent who, according to his wife, saw himself as a "revolutionary." He was part of the same Soviet network that included Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers. When Chambers quit the Communist spy ring, he went to White in an attempt to convince him also to quit, but, like Hiss, White rejected Chambers' plea.

Testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee, White denied that he had ever met Chambers. But Chambers still had in his possession a handwritten memo of intelligence information that White had given to Chambers for delivery to the Soviets. Chambers left the spy ring in 1938, but another courier, Elizabeth Bentley, who did not leave the ring until after World War II, testified that White continued to pass secrets to Moscow. White died of a heart attack during the subsequent investigations. As stated in Allen Weinstein's authoritative study, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*, "White not only passed confidential data but also helped place influential Communists in sensitive positions within Treasury." White was not just an espionage agent, but also an agent of influence attempting to move policy in directions that advanced his own peculiar notions of progress rather than the national interests of the United States.

Why would a high State Department official praise a Soviet spy? Did Whitehead feel that since his UN Association audience was composed of self-styled "citizens of the world," resurrecting a traitor would impress them? Or was this just a gaffe resulting from historical ignorance, displayed not only by the deputy secretary but also by the State Dept. bureaucracy that cleared this particular speech for wider distribution?

We see now that our opening question "when did 'globalization' become a tenet of conservatism" is a trick question. From its intellectual lineage, it is clear that it has never been a tenet of any philosophy properly called conservative. Its sudden popularity testifies to the low state of historical understanding within the conservative movement.

—*William R. Hawkins*

SCHOOL decentralization was one of the few practical items on the New Left's agenda of the 1960's. It was a genuinely radical idea, since the entire history of public education in the US has been the steady progress of consolidation and centralization. Small districts were merged, time after time, into larger consolidated units, and power was inexorably shifted to the professionals who ran the district. What had once been local districts under democratic control turned into a nightmare of bureaucratic arrogance and ineptitude—a sort of gulag with a human face.

New York was supposed to be the proving ground for decentralization, but the arrest in November of the principal of P.S. 53 (an elementary school in the Bronx) has triggered a

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mainly hostile reexamination of an experiment that has gone on for two decades. The indictment includes the usual charges of nepotism, political cronyism, ethnic politics, graft, and corruption, but the situation is aggravated, so the critics claim, by the power that has been transferred to the smaller district boards.

The whole argument is academic, since, in fact, New York public education was never decentralized. There are only 32 boards overseeing over 800 schools with over 650,000 students. The election was so complicated that many parents were deterred from voting, and the whole system was turned over to the political gangsters who run New York on a day-to-day basis.

To make matters worse, not only were the local boards supposed to control far too many schools, but they were never given the sort of real power over policies and personnel that would have spurred parents into taking an active role. In government there is no power that does not include control over the purse strings. The local councils were designed, more or less, as a sop to ethnic politicians who felt they weren't lapping enough of the fat off the government gravy. The only thing worse than the current system would be an increased involvement of the state government and that fearless defender of the rights of bureaucrats, Mario Cuomo. Inevitably, Mr. Cuomo has set up a New York state commission to review the problem.

None of New York's entirely predictable horror stories should deter the deconsolidation experiment underway in Dade County, Florida or the much-advertised Chicago plan due to take effect in July of 1989. Chicago is a strong contender for the honor of worst school system in the nation, which is some sort of indication that the "professionals" may not know what is best for our children. In a very important study released by the Heartland Institute and the United Republican Fund of Illinois, *We Can Rescue Our Schools*, incontrovertible evidence is presented to prove that smaller districts and parental control are among the most significant factors in determining a good school. The book, which is clearly written in a popular style, ought to be in the hands of every parent and taxpayer in the country. It is available for $1.75 (with bulk discounts available) from Green Hill Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 738, Ottawa, IL 61350.

The Chicago plan avoids most of the pitfalls of the New York experiment. Each school will be governed by its own council, and six out of eleven council members must be parents of students and elected by parents. The biggest opponents of the plan were educational professionals who look upon parental involvement with fear and loathing. Much of the debate in Chicago turned downright racist, as the establishment attempted to give the impression that the city's entire black population consisted of teenage mothers and drug dealers. Leaders of (mostly black) parents' groups quite rightly objected. All they are asking for, they insist, is the chance to lend a hand in cleaning up the terrifying mess that enlightened bureaucrats have made.

But the politicians and sociologists who bray so loudly of democracy have no intention of granting power to the people. If democracy in America ever meant anything, it did not mean our elaborate system of influence brokering presided over by Congressional staffers, civil servants, and social sciences professors. It meant local control of local affairs and a stubborn refusal to let the government intrude too far into private life. Today, in the mouths of global democrats, it seems to mean something like the African system of "one man, one vote, one time." In 1932, by electing Franklin Roosevelt President for Life, we apparently declared that government by the government, of the government and for the government shall not perish from the earth. God willing, the people of Chicago—saddled with an abysmal educational system and a city government that brings Pulitzers to the reporters who cover it—may reclaim some small part of their American birthright. (TF)

HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS in the Soviet Union is the latest gimmick for headline writers. In just two months the Soviets have made such strides that on January 3, our outgoing secretary of state—with only two weeks left in which to make mischief—advised Ronald "Evil Empire" Reagan to go ahead with plans for a human rights conference in Moscow in the year 1991. Even *The New York Times* conceded that "rights talks in Moscow would be an important achievement for Mikhail S. Gorbachev."

Mr. Schultz has never been conspicuous for his good sense, but if he prevails upon his President and his President's successor to eat this particularly unsavory crow, he will deserve some special recognition as the American Neville Chamberlain.

Dare I say we told you so last December? This human rights nonsense is bad enough as a cynical tool of American foreign policy, but it is one of those clumsy explosive devices that always manage to blow up the political hooligans who use it. On a purely practical level we have much to discuss with the leaders of the USSR on issues that involve the self-interest of both parties. Neither name-calling nor sentimentality is of any use in negotiations that call for a Metternich or a Bismark. (We're stuck with Cyrus Vance and George Schultz.) It was bad enough to exploit the victims of Soviet oppression as a pawn in our little diplomatic games, but as of January 3, 1989, the Soviet Union became a free country. What a difference a day made.

It is now up to George Bush (I never thought I'd be saying this) to restore some sanity to American foreign policy. If he persists in these childish experiments in human rights and global democracy, we shall all live to see the day when it is the US whose human rights record is the object of international obloquy. (TF)

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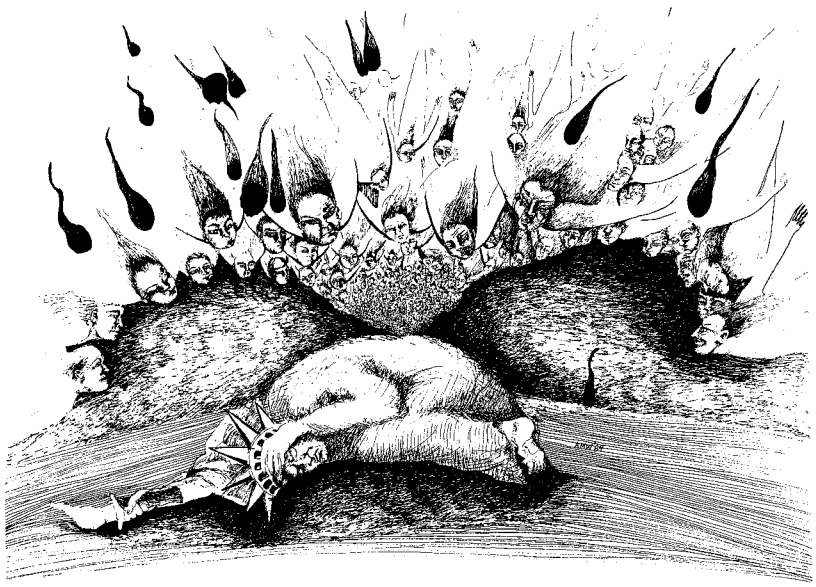

The Real American Dilemma

by Thomas Fleming

America is a nation of immigrants. How often is that declaration trotted out to explain why it would be immoral to do something about controlling immigration, as if every country were not a nation of immigrants. If Britain ever had an indigenous population, it was overrun by Celts, Germans, Danes, and Normans—to say nothing of the Hollanders brought over and ennobled when Dutch William drove his father-in-law from the throne. Almost any country, excepting the poor benighted Scandinavians, could tell a similar story, and the present condition of Sweden is as good an argument as I can think of against a restricted gene pool. (It is also a total refutation of the hilarious idea of Nordic supremacy.)

It is conventional to speak of the great contributions made by immigrants and at the same time to deplore the unpleasant reception they were given by the WASP population. No one ever seems to carry the argument back to the reception the Indians usually tried to arrange for European settlers pushing into their territories. We are all, even the Indians, descended from immigrants, and it is hard to pick which group has contributed most to the fabric of our civilization.

In some sort of descending order one would have to include the various British stocks, the Germans and Dutch, the French (especially the Huguenots), and the more recent arrivals from eastern and southern Europe. In addition, no account of American culture could leave out the strange and often strained relations between European Americans and the American blacks whose ancestors were brought here by force. Jazz, the blues, and rock music, all hybrids of the two stocks, could stand as a metaphor for our "peculiar" relationship.

In recent years, however, while the main focus in the polite media has remained on the contributions and sufferings of hyphenated Americans, ordinary Americans are more concerned with the problems caused by the virtual flood of arrivals from the Third World. For some years now, legal immigration has been at an average rate of over 600,000 per year, while the number of illegals in this country is anybody's guess. In 1985 Richard Lamm and Gary Imhoff (*The Immigration Time Bomb: The Fragmenting of America*) estimated eight and a half to eleven million, mostly from Latin America.

Immigration reform was the great issue of the Reagan years that never really took shape, and it will be up to Mr. Bush, the Congress, and above all to the opinion industry to settle the future of the United States. There was a debate, of course, and one celebrated bill that didn't make it (Simpson-Mazzoli) as well as the version that did, but most of the discussion was safely trivial: whether or not to tighten up the border controls and send back (temporarily) a certain number of illegals, and how merciful to be in granting amnesty. Ultimately—and this is a sign of how low we have fallen—most of the conversation was about money. Think of the jobs that need to be done, the fruit that needs to be picked, the houses cleaned. Think of the contributions to science and industry made by talented immigrants.

After we've done thinking about what's in it for agribusiness and electronics, we just might begin to wonder what is in store for the American people. Not too long ago, I had a chance to go over the whole ground with one of the brightest defenders of free trade and open borders in the

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country. He waxed eloquent over the family values of the Mexicans and the high intelligence of the Orientals. Finally, I asked him: suppose we could set off neutron bombs all over the United States, wipe out the current citizen population and replace them with brilliant and hardworking Chinese. From his perspective, wouldn't that be a plus? I'm still waiting for an answer.

The trouble began with treating the nation as an abstraction: the land of the free and the home of the brave was turned into the land of opportunity for what the Statue of Liberty's plaque so quaintly calls "the wretched refuse" of the world. A real country, with its own history, its own particular set of virtues and vices, its own special institutions was reduced to cheap slogans and loyalty oaths. (I don't know which is worse: requiring children to mouth the Pledge of Allegiance or, once we have instituted such a form of petty fascism, refusing to require it. What an election.)

The truth is, we have to confine our discussion to abstractions, including that abstraction that serves as a metaphor for an entire way of life—money, because what some Americans worry about cannot be spoken to the network reporters doing on-the-street interviews for the evening news. Despite the risks, some people are incautious enough to sign letters to the editor or call in to the radio talk shows that are increasingly the only form for free expression. What these simple folk are saying is that they do not care how smart the Chinese are or how religious the Mexicans are. If they're so smart, virtuous, and diligent, how come the countries they are leaving are in such a god-awful mess? The old question, "If you so smart, why ain't you rich?" applies to nations as well as individuals.

In his essay "Immigration and Liberal Taboos" (in *One Life at a Time, Please*), Edward Abbey sums up the situation with his customary restraint and discretion: "They come to stay and they stay to multiply. What of it? say the documented liberals; ours is a rich and generous nation, we have room for all, let them come. And let them stay, say the conservatives; a large, cheap, frightened, docile, surplus labor force is exactly what the economy needs. Put some fear into the unions: tighten discipline, spur productivity, whip up the competition for jobs. The conservatives love their cheap labor; the liberals love their cheap cause."

Abbey concludes by asking, "How many of us, truthfully, would prefer to be submerged in the Caribbean-Latin version of civilization?" Stripped of its anger, Abbey's question is worth asking. If we can judge from his novels, Abbey actually likes Mexico and its people. But for better or worse, he likes his own country more, and not necessarily because it is better (although he obviously thinks, as I do, that it is). But a nation, as the word implies (from *nascor*, be born) is a fictional extended family. Like members of a family, the citizens of a nation prefer each other's company and will sacrifice for the common good, not because they think their family or nation is superior to every other, but simply because it is theirs. The Germans may have better music, the English a clearer prose, the Russians a deeper spirituality, but Americans have, on occasion, been willing to shoot any of them in the defense or even the interest of the United States. And, it goes without saying, that all of these European people have displayed a marked capacity for becoming Americans.

There's the rub. Do Abbey's liberals and conservatives believe that there is anything particular about the American identity? After all, most of us don't blame the French for wanting to be French, and we all profess to sympathize with the desire of black Africans to rule their own countries and develop their own traditions without interference from white Europeans. Why is it only America that is denied an identity?

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Cultural pluralism is not the most attractive legacy we can leave to our children. As a nation, we have barely survived the existence of two separate populations, black and white, and we have a long way to go in working out better relations between those two groups. What shall we do when the whole of America becomes a multiracial Alexandria?

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There is, after all, an American story that is primarily a saga of enterprising men and women who came here from Europe. The language and culture, as well as the legal and political systems, were derived from Britain. This way of life of ours is not the result of any general principle; it is the legacy of our forebears and a civilization that goes back to Greece and Rome. It is vastly creative and has shown an enormous capacity for transforming immigrants from somewhat differing cultures. This capacity is not infinite, and a United States dominated by Third World immigrants will be a very different nation in its cultural and its economic life.

Part of the problem is a question of numbers. Talented immigrants are, for the most part, highly assimilable, but mass migrations are disruptive and threaten social cohesion. Between 1976 and 1986, the number of immigrants from Africa doubled, while the numbers from Asia, Mexico, and Haiti all quadrupled. (Haiti, by the way, was on the low side for the Caribbean: Jamaica was up 700 percent). The big winner, however, was India, whose stock rose an impresssive 2,000 percent.

Like most Americans since, Thomas Jefferson firmly believed that this country should provide a haven for talented and freedom-loving people. He was also aware of the risks. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson pointed out that the American form of government was derived from "the freest principles of the English Constitution." It was diametrically opposed to the absolutisms that ruled over most of Europe. Emigrants from such countries, he warned, "will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave . . . or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another."

What would have especially aroused Jefferson's fears is the current reigning assumption that special arrangements have to be made for "refugees" from political oppression. Conservatives want to open the door to Cubans and Nicaraguans, while leftists give shelter to Salvadorans and

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South African blacks. What both groups are saying, in essence, is that they would like the United States to turn into Nicaragua or Haiti. Of course, all humane people sympathize with the victims of political oppression; wherever possible we would like to do something for them. But we must never forget that immigration policy is the most significant means of determining the future of our nation, and we owe it to our children not to squander their birthright in spasms of imprudent charity.

One frightening dimension to American charity is the curious notion that aliens and immigrants have rights. Once upon a time, it was clearly understood that no one had anything like a "right" to enter the United States, and that aliens who were allowed in possessed only such benefits of the legal system as Congress and the various state governments chose to give them. Of course, illegal aliens could be routinely rounded up and interned pending their deportation, but even legal aliens were routinely denied state charity, government jobs, and even such government-licensed activities as commercial fishing and the operation of pool halls. These restrictions were routinely upheld by the Supreme Court.

After World War II, however, the federal courts have increasingly recognized—invented would be a better word—the rights of aliens. In a 1948 case (*Takahashi* v. *Fish and Game Commission*), the Supreme Court declared that California's restrictions on off-shore fishing were invalid, and in 1971 the Court declared that a state could not deny welfare to aliens, finding that aliens were a discriminated against minority deserving of special protection. In other words, they were to be given more rights than citizens.

One by one all the barriers have fallen, and legal aliens enjoy all the rights and privileges of citizenship, except for voting and holding office. Until recently, the one privilege the government did retain was the ability to detain and intern illegal aliens, but that too has come under fire. In late 1987 Cuban illegals staged a riot in two prisons where they were being held. The US Court of Appeals in Atlanta did find—regretfully—that unadmitted aliens had no rights, but the effect of the riots was to blackmail the government into granting hearings on the rioters' cases. In the political debate that broke out, politicians and judges alike demanded a recognition of aliens' rights. Georgia Republican Pat Swindall—and I hope our Georgia readers will take note—argued that the Cubans actually had (not even ought to have) Fifth Amendment rights. Swindall is not entirely off the wall, since he has the support of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, whose reverence for the Constitution is a matter of public record. In a number of dissenting opinions, Marshall has insisted that in criminal cases unadmitted aliens are entitled to all the protections of the Bill of Rights.

Of course, we could go on as we are doing, whittling away at our definition of citizenship, letting sovereignty slip through our fingers, but if we refuse to control immigration, our options are severely limited. The least unattractive solution would be to implement the federal principle on a state and regional level, recognizing Hispanics and Orientals, in states where they form a majority, as the dominant group—much as the French are given special status in Quebec. (We must not imitate the disastrous Canadian policy of nationwide bilingualism.) Descendants of the old settlers that fought and won the land from Mexico will be quite rightly indignant with what many Mexicans are already calling the Reconquest, and we shall probably have far more trouble than Canada in adjusting to a multicultural situation. Perhaps after a century or two we can evolve into a safely neutered society of consumers—like Switzerland. It is just as likely to be a bloodbath.

A far less attractive scenario than either Switzerland or tribal civil war Nigerian style would be a forced Americanization on the grand scale. It didn't work all that well the last time we tried it, when Catholics were hectored and bullied out of the officially Protestant public schools, and considering the sort of people who run the federal bureaucracy today, we will in effect be writing the death sentence on republican self-government. Only an empire, with a vast machinery of manipulation (including some form of state religion) could succeed in creating order out of such a Babel, and the best we could hope for would be either a military *junta* or a fascist welfare state—Sweden with a führer.

What then, if anything, can be done? There are several obvious changes in immigration policy that need to be made. First of all, we need to put an end to the mass migrations to the US. It was the Völkerwanderungen of the Germans and Huns that brought the Roman Empire down, and we shall be in even worse straits if we fail to control our Southern border and do not adopt a more hard-nosed approach to refugees fleeing the political turmoil, high population growth, and economic chaos of the Third World.

We also need to reexamine our priorities. From the 20's to the 50's, American immigration law made it very clear that we intended to be what we had always been: a European nation. The quota that took effect in 1929 was based on the ethnic background of the existing population of the US and allotted 85 percent of the total to northern and western Europe and 12 percent to the rest of Europe.

The Immigration Act of 1952 did preserve the national origins quota (not abolished till 1965), but within the system a separate set of ordered priorities were established. Preference was given first to immigrants with desirable (i.e. marketable) skills, second to relatives of citizens and resident aliens. Along with the abolition of national quotas in 1965 came changes in the preference system. Now unmarried children of citizens come first, spouses of resident aliens second, and exceptional and talented immigrants third. Other relatives of citizens and resident aliens come fourth and fifth, while workers with needed skills come sixth.

The result is the all-too-familiar scams by which undesired aliens contrive to give birth on US soil or arrange marriages of convenience. In either event, one unskilled alien can end up bringing "all his sisters and his cousins (whom he reckons up by dozens) and his aunts." The figures tell the story. Despite a total quota of only 270,000, the special categories have accelerated the rate of legal immigration to almost three times that. Ted Kennedy, by the way, is primarily responsible for the difference. In 1965, he served as floor manager of the legislation in the Senate, and in 1980 he sponsored amendments that removed the

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ceiling on admission, promising no more than 50,000 additional immigrants as a consequence.

What should come first is not the interest of the alien or even of US businesses, but the interest of the historical population of the country. Family members must, as Lamm and Imhoff among others insist, be included under a comprehensive total. We should continue, as Jefferson wished, to open our doors to talented emigrants not because they will make money for IBM, but because bright and able people are a precious and scarce commodity. More fruit-pickers we do not need. Cut off the welfare payments and we shall be surprised at how many agricultural workers are living right now in Chicago and New York. The most pressing need, however, is the reestablishment of national quotas. These need not be based on the formulas of the 1920's, but nonetheless should give first priority to the population base of the nation.

One doesn't wish to be unkind, but cultural pluralism is not the most attractive legacy we can leave to our children. As a nation, we have barely survived the existence of two separate populations, black and white, and we have a long way to go in working out better relations between those two groups. What shall we do when the whole of America becomes a multiracial Alexandria? As the Romans realized, citizenship implies certain very concrete rights and duties: the right to trade and make contracts, the obligation to serve in the army, the right to intermarry. While it is true that there are no laws restricting marriage between the races, such unions are very uncommon. According to census figures, less than two percent of existing marriages are of mixed race, and even projecting a modest rate of increase over the next few decades, it is highly unlikely that we shall realize anything approaching a homogeneous population in the near future.

The problem, if it is a problem, is not simply one more case of white intolerance. The pressures against mixed race dating and marriage are every bit as strong in the black and Oriental communities. This is not a question of *ought*, but a case of *is*, and the result will be a nation no longer stratified simply by class but by race as well. Europeans and Orientals will compete, as groups, for the top positions, while the other groups will nurse their resentment on the weekly welfare checks they receive from the other half. Perhaps such an arrangement can be worked out, but whatever emerges will not be a nation, certainly not the United States.

The situation is quite as serious as even the most frightened alarmists have suggested, but we cannot begin even to speak seriously about changes in the law until we are willing to violate the code of silence that the left has imposed upon the topic. There is a pressing need for plain speech and open discussion in which those who happen to agree with the overwhelming majority of Americans throughout our history are not stigmatized as xenophobes and racists. If the notion of aliens' rights really takes hold, we are in danger of losing the entire concept of American citizenship. Above all, we have to quit lying to ourselves about who we are and what we face. If sober and sensible people cannot solve the immigration problem through an orderly process of debate and legislation, then there are genuine crazies out there only waiting for the chance to use such an issue as a springboard to power. ◈

The Woodpile Skull

by X.J. Kennedy

Not one now to mock your own
grinning? quite chop-fallen?

That log I took for one more log to stack
Spills from my arms and, sprawling on its back,
Drops from its splintered face an ant's death's-head,
Jaws pincered round a crumb of hardwood bread.
I weigh it on one fingertip—in shock,
Have to sit down upon my chopping block.
To think: a neck so slight could so hold steady
An oak trunk till its final throes got ready.

How did my chainsaw know enough to bite
With such precision? Tumbrils in the night
Could not have trundled to a guillotine
A marquis for a severing more clean.
I doubt he'd meant so faithfully to stand—
He hadn't heard his regiment disband.
Fate fell on him as on some primitive
Who feels beneath his feet the tundra give
Onto a tar pit and, before he wists,
Wakes to the spades of archeologists.

This dying, while a country mile from great,
Leads one to think a bit less well of Fate
For feigning such remote indifference
While handing down malicious accidents.
I wouldn't put it past Their Enmities
To thin us out as winter winnows trees
With callous unpremeditated blows
And bask in comfort from our overthrows.

Wind wedges through my woodpile. But this chill
Climbs from a new sense: I can blindly kill
And can be killed. Bemused and metaphoric,
I stand, ham Hamlet to a formic Yorick.

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The Celtic Heritage of the Old South

by Grady McWhiney

Southerners are not like other Americans. Significant cultural differences have always separated them from the North. Even today cultural variations between Southern black and white people are fewer than those between white Southerners and white Northerners. In other words, the population of the United States is more divided culturally along regional lines than along racial lines, and studies indicate that cultural diversity between Southerners and Northerners is greater than that between manual and nonmanual workers, city dwellers and country people, Protestants and Catholics, and males and females. Furthermore, such cultural disharmony has divided the South from the North for more than three hundred years.

Fundamental and lasting divisions between Southerners and Northerners appeared during the colonial period, when migrants from the Celtic regions of the British Isles—Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, and the English uplands—planted their traditional ways in the Old South. From this solid 18th-century base in the Southern backcountry, Celts and their descendants swept westward decade after decade throughout the antebellum period until they had established themselves and their anti-English values and customs across the South. By the end of the antebellum period, people of Celtic heritage far outnumbered the combined total of all other white Southerners, and their traditional culture dominated the region. The antebellum North, on the other hand, was settled and influenced principally by people who had migrated from the English lowlands. Cultural differences between Northerners and Southerners shaped the course of antebellum American history and ultimately exploded into the War for Southern Independence, a conflict that was not as much brother against brother as culture against culture.

Neither the North nor the South, of course, was completely homogeneous in culture. Not every Yankee habit or trait was English, any more than every Rebel habit or trait was Celtic. Slaves, certain planters, and some townsfolk and professional people claimed no Celtic heritage, but the overwhelming majority of Southerners adopted Celtic traditions, just as most Northerners practiced English ways.

Grady McWhiney is the author of Cracker Culture *(University of Alabama Press), from which this article is adapted.*

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In examining the Celtic heritage of the Old South, it is important to recognize that only those cultural traits associated with British Celts up to the 18th century are relevant. There are two reasons for this: first, all significant migration from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to the American South ended before 1800; and second, long-standing English efforts in Britain to acculturate the Celts began to force a number of important changes in Celtic ways during the latter part of the 18th century.

Among the most fundamental attributes that Celts brought to the Old South were those rooted in their system of social organization, language, and means of livelihood. The first two, the clans and the Gaelic and Brythonic tongues, had been considerably eroded in the United Kingdom and were nearly extinct by the end of the 18th century. Neither trait was freely transplanted in America, yet each left an indelible imprint on the South. The third, the traditional Celtic means of making a livelihood by raising animals, became central to the Southern way of life.

The clans—which traditionally had provided group identification and established lines of authority that preserved order and settled grievances—did not make the Atlantic crossing, but habits born of centuries of living in clans did. Throughout the antebellum South the principal social unit was not the nuclear family but the extended family, comprising large numbers of people with close or distant blood ties along with genetically unrelated "uncles" and "aunts" and cousins by the dozens. Even plantations tended to be so organized, and among middle-class and poorer whites the extended family was nearly universal. Nor has the system entirely disappeared in the 20th century.

The legacy of the clans also endures in attitudes toward authority. Clansmen never sought redress of a grievance in the courts or through legislative enactments; instead, they appealed to the clan chieftain or his lieutenants. This habit was rooted early and deeply in the South. When Southerners had a problem with government or the law, their resort was not to the courts but to a protector—whoever had the necessary influence or power. Even today, among rural Southerners, the courtroom is so alien that when they speak of "the law" they refer to the sheriff or the police.

The influence of the language, though less direct and tangible, was no less significant. Among other things, language interacts with and reinforces social norms that can persist even after the language itself has changed, and so it was with Celtic Southerners in at least two important respects. One had to do with social control. Some anthropologists distinguish between societies governed by the "guilt principle" and those governed by the "shame principle," England being a prime example of the first and the Scottish Highlands and Ireland being prime examples of the second. The Englishman was conditioned to internalize his sense of proper behavior—even when sailing alone across the sea or when stranded among heathens, he was always proper, for God and conscience were watching. The Celt, by contrast, had no faith in the slender reed of inner discipline, relying instead upon social disapproval, mainly in the form of ridicule; significantly, Gaelic is a hundredfold richer in its terms of derision than is English. Yankees adopted the English way; Southerners the Celtic way.

The other carry-over from the language was subtler yet. Though Irish became a standardized written language fairly early, both Irish and British Celtic were more suitable as spoken than as written languages. So, too, with the people: Celts and Southerners, unlike Englishmen and Yankees, were oral and aural. They loved raucous and lively music—fiddles, clogging, reels, and jigs. They loved making noise for its own sake. Above all, Celts and their Southern descendants loved words and the sounds of words. They loved oratory, from the stump or the pulpit; they loved to tell stories, the more outlandish the better; they loved to talk, even when they had nothing to say.

The most crucial characteristic that Celts brought with them to America, however, was their method of raising animals for a livelihood and an associated disdain for the drudgery of tillage agriculture. Herding is not popularly associated with either Celts or Southerners, yet traditionally Celts were a pastoral people and so were Southerners. The value of Southern livestock, mostly hogs and cattle, during the antebellum period was greater than the value of all the Old South's tillage crops combined.

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The ways of Southerners, like those of their Celtic ancestors, frequently shocked observers. "They are a wild race, with but little order or morals among them," claimed one Yankee. "They are indolent, devoted to raising cattle, hunting, and drinking whiskey." "They are profane, and excessively addicted to gambling," said another.

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The Southern method of raising livestock was a continuation of traditional Celtic herding, and the vast rich spaces of the Old South provided an easy existence. Animals were rarely tended; instead, they were marked or branded to indicate their ownership and turned loose to forage. Southern land laws, from the earliest colonial times until the 20th century, legalized open-range herding and ignored English common law. Crops in the South could be fenced, but otherwise animals were free to graze the land of anyone and everyone, rich and poor alike. Once a year, in the fall, surplus animals were rounded up and driven to market.

Unlike Yankees and Englishmen, who were compulsive plowers and often obsessed with agricultural improvements, Celts and Southerners cultivated crops reluctantly and haphazardly. They rarely used fertilizers, and their primitive techniques appalled outsiders. Many Southerners disdained tillage agriculture as fit only for slaves and Yankees, preferring instead to live off their livestock and work as little as possible.

Some of the characteristics that contemporary observers attributed to both Celts and Southerners, in addition to those already described, included living leisurely and indulging the sensual pleasures. Celts and Southerners, whose values were more agrarian than those of Englishmen and Yankees, wasted more time, rarely read or wrote, consumed

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more liquor and tobacco, and were less concerned with the useful and the material.

Critics damned the British Celts, calling them "drinkers and gamblers," "remarkably lazy," "adverse to industry, never working but from necessity," and "holding that bodily labour of all sorts was mean and disgraceful." One observer charged that the Irish would "sit upon their hams, like greyhounds in the sun, and work not one jott." Reportedly "a drunken kind of people," whose "propensity for intoxication has been remarkable from the earliest times," Celts also used "great quantities of tobacco in all its forms," and were much addicted to swearing and fighting.

Southerners, contemporaries claimed, possessed these same characteristics. "They are a wild race, with but little order or morals among them," claimed a Yankee. "They are indolent, devoted to raising cattle, hunting, and drinking whiskey." Southerners "only work two days in the week, and keep holiday the other days," reported a traveler. Typical white Southerners, identified by a contemporary as "the hardy descendants of the early Scotch and Irish settlers," were "good horsemen, marksmen, and hunters, but are not remarkable for agricultural industry. They are squatters rather than farmers." Moreover, he concluded, "they will not work." The wife of a Southerner insisted that her husband "would not take a house or live in one, lest he should have to work." Even Confederate General Robert E. Lee admitted: "Our people are opposed to work. All ridicule and resist it."

After living in the South, a Northerner concluded that all Southerners, white and black, resisted toil. "A neighbour of hers owned fifty cows, she supposed, but very rarely had any milk and scarcely ever any butter, simply because his people were too lazy to milk or churn, and he wouldn't take the trouble to make them." Slaves, she said, were as lazy as their masters: "Folks up North talked about how badly the negroes were treated; she wished they could see how much work her girls did. She had four of them, and she knew they didn't do half so much work as one good Dutch girl such as she used to have at the North."

The ways of Southerners, like those of their Celtic ancestors, frequently shocked observers. "They are profane, and excessively addicted to gambling," explained a Yankee. "This horrible vice prevails like an epidemic. Betting and horse-racing are amusements eagerly pursued, and often times to the ruin of the parties." Gambling frequently led to quarrels, noted an observer, "which are sometimes ended by the pistol." Visitors frequently complained about the "roughness" and "wickedness" of Southern society, and the addiction of Southerners to tobacco and spitting.

Drinking, which most Southerners relished, often led to violence. "The men of the South," insisted a visitor, "are sudden and quick to quarrel. The dirk or the pistol is always at hand. Fatal duels frequently occur." Southerners were never pacifists. "The darkest side of the Southerner is his quarrelsomeness, and recklessness of human life," wrote a wayfarer. "The terrible bowie-knife is ever ready to be drawn and used on the slightest provocation." The martial spirit, which Southerners shared with their Celtic ancestors, remained strong in the South.

Despite their violence and indolence, Celts and Southerners offered hospitality that few people could match. Even some of the most critical travelers praised the warmth with which Celts and Southerners received them. It was customary in both the Celtic areas of the British Isles and in the antebellum South to overwhelm people with hospitality, to encourage them to eat, drink, and enjoy themselves; it also was traditional in both places, as an 18th-century Scottish lady explained, "to please your company." Travelers praised the kindness of Southerners, who were "ever ready to welcome the wayfarer to their hospitable firesides." "If you are disposed to be convivial," noted a traveler, "you may dine with some one every day." "They welcomed us to everything," said one man.

Their casual attitude toward life made Celts and Southerners less materialistic—less oriented toward the making of money—than most folk. Premodern Celts boasted that they coveted no wealth; as pastoralists and warriors, they "despised" trade and what they called "mercenary Employments." Showing her contempt for money, an 18th-century Scotswoman, in the words of her debtor, "lighted her pipe with the note I gave her for the money I owed her." A Yankee observed that Southerners "are more reckless of the value of money than any people that I have seen." He also noted that wealth impressed Southerners less than it did most other people. Another visitor insisted that there was "no part of the world where great wealth confers so little rank, or is attended with so few advantages, [as in the South]." Still another man contended that Southerners coveted dogs more than money.

Another characteristic adopted from the Celts was the informal and rural ways of Southerners. Visitors reported that most people in the South lived unpretentiously in carelessly built cabins. A traveler described a typical Southern home as one "ventilated on an entirely new principle; that is to say, by wide cracks in the floor, broad spaces between the logs that composed the walls, huge openings in the roof, and a window with a shutter that could not be closed." Southern roads and bridges—where there were any—were as poorly constructed and maintained as those in premodern Scotland and Ireland. Such was the case, one man claimed, because Southerners were "extraordinarily indifferent to practical internal improvements."

Both Celts and Southerners spent much time outdoors. Expert marksmen and anglers, they enjoyed hunting and fishing. Fast horses and dogs were as much a part of their lives as hogs and cattle. One antebellum traveler dined on venison and trout brought in by "two little fellows that

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looked almost too small to shoulder a gun." Another visitor in the Old South counted 13 "guns *hung* up along the rafters" of a two-room log cabin.

Southerners were not "bookish." Formal education meant less to them and their Celtic ancestors than learning to master their natural environment. The Southern woman described by a traveler as "sitting with a pipe in her mouth, doing no work and reading no books" would doubtless have agreed with the Southern man who, when asked by a Yankee if he liked to read, replied: "No, it's damn tiresome." It has been said, only partly in jest, that more Southerners wrote books than read them.

Neither Celts nor their Southern descendants regarded their ways as unusual or reprehensible. The laziness and lack of ambition that good Englishmen and Yankees considered deplorable were viewed differently by traditional Celts and antebellum Southerners. They delighted in their livestock culture and their comfortable customs. To them being lazy did not mean being indolent, shiftless, slothful, and worthless; it meant being free from work, having spare time to do as they pleased, being at liberty, and enjoying their leisure. They saw no point in working when their livestock would make their living; they thought anyone who worked when he did not have to was crazy. Nor did they see any reason to have more than they could eat, or drink, or wear, or ride. Unlike conscientious Englishmen or Northerners, when Celts and Southerners said they were being lazy, they were not reproaching themselves, but merely describing their state of comfort. They suffered no guilt when they spent their time pleasantly—hunting, fishing, dancing, drinking, gambling, fighting, or just loafing and talking.

These are not the characteristics that make great empires, and no Celtic society ever made one, but the Celtic-Southern way has two redeeming virtues. First, when outsiders supply the discipline and constancy, Celts are capable of mighty achievements, as British history has shown. Even under the unimaginative rule of England, the Irish and the Welsh produced an almost endless number of poets and playwrights, actors and musicians; and the Scots, for more than two centuries, kept the United Kingdom supplied not only with its best fighting men but also with its most brilliant philosophers, physicians, scientists, and engineers. The Celtic contribution in America has been no less profound.

The other virtue may be more valuable. We are finally beginning to realize that modern industrial society, for all its material benefits, was purchased at a staggering cost in the form of alienation, depersonalization, regimentation, and bureaucratization. Southerners knew that all along; they resisted the building of such a civilization. And in their traditional life-style there is a lesson that others might profit from, a lesson having to do with orienting your life toward leisure rather than toward achievement. Perhaps it is better to go hunting and fishing than to work nine-to-five in an office or a factory. Perhaps it is more important to visit and talk with friends and family than to get the job done. Perhaps it is more rewarding to know the joys of dreaming and bragging than to know the frustrations and heartache of attempting to accomplish. As a 20th-century American the author has been conditioned to believe otherwise, but as a born and bred Celt Southerner he suspects that he is wrong.

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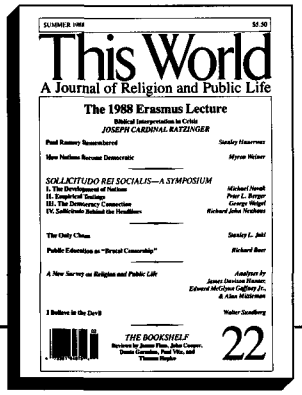

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Unsere Leute

by Jean Bethke Elshtain

The familiar lane is rutted with two deep truck tracks. "This always happens when it rains," I think, and worry about getting stuck until I remember that the rain was two days ago and the ruts would have hardened by now, forming a two-lane trail to the farmhouse, Grandma's house, "Grandma in the country." Grandma is 85; Grandpa died last year, age 87. Grandma knows my daughter, Heidi, one of her 16 great-grandchildren, and we are coming, paying her a day-long visit during one of our infrequent trips home. Home is Colorado; home will always be Colorado. As Grandma would put it, "So that's the way it is."

Because our visit is anticipated, the kitchen will be suffused with rich aromas: the famous rye bread; the renowned chicken soup with "butterballs" (made of fine bread crumbs, held together with "real" cream and butter, molded into two bite-size nuggets, set afloat in golden broth); the notoriously delicious "Revel Kuga" (a sweet roll dough crust, topped with fresh cherries and a butter crumb mixture). The aromas are as I expect them to be, as I have expected them to be for as long as I can remember. Grandma, her back permanently bowed over from the effects of hard stoop labor in the fields, all those years of bending to hoe sugar beets, her gray hair cut short now as the bowed back makes brushing long hair and winding it into a bun difficult, greets us with a hug, a kiss, and the repeated words, "So good to see you. So glad you could come. I love all my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. All."

Having fed us, Grandma shows us the collection of quilts she's made since we were in Colorado last year. Her quilts get bolder, positively psychedelic, with each passing year, as if advanced age and the nearness of death have released a long dormant romantic dimension in her soul. She asks Heidi to pick out the one she likes best so she can take it back with her. Heidi whispers to me, "I already have so many. Oh well, this one is so beautiful. I'll use it as a wall-hanging at Pratt."

Then Heidi and her great-grandmother move to the sewing table. Out comes the familiar sewing kit. Heidi is urged to pick out "any buttons you want" and to select bits of lace or anything else that "might come in handy" for her own sewing. I don't sew so I stand by and watch the discussion of the honorable craft of creating things of beauty and utility to provide envelopes for our bodies or warmth for our beds. I glance at the wall and notice the baptismal, confirmation, and wedding certificates and the citizenship papers, the markers of a long life lived in intimate communion with others. I mark once again Grandma's pride and

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her intensity, her conviction that she has lived a good life and a productive one, and that her one wish now, that keen desire that keeps the fires of her life burning, is that her heritage of crafts and wisdom and piety and goodness be passed on directly by her, now to great-grandchildren.

Later we pay a visit to the outdoor "cellar," a sunken stone structure, always cool, and Grandma shows Heidi where we used to "put up" catsup and sauerkraut and sausage in the summer, done less frequently now in this cellar though they are not entirely forgotten, and have not been displaced totally by supermarket packages and plasticized fare. We return to the kitchen—this is the ritual—and Grandma delivers her homilies. She moved into this mode of direct "telling" when the clan grew older and a few went away and visits by some came less often. The wisdom that is hers, the symbols and values and rules that animate her life and make it make "sense," now must be imparted directly in gentle but firm perorations.

Once, when the family gathered 'round every Sunday, when there were fewer and less far-flung members, Grandma didn't need to rely on homilies. Her principles were imbedded in her daily activities. Her commitment to family honor, decency, sharing, helping one's neighbor, tending to the sick and needy, and honest hard work was visible for all to witness. But now she uses little stories and parables to impart these values to those family members who rarely witness them "in action," including a great-granddaughter from "the East." Grandma tells the story of the devastating flu pandemic of 1919 ("I think it was, or 1920, right in there") when she went off, placing herself in peril, to nurse some neighbors. One whole family was down with the flu. Two children and the mother died. Grandma tended to the sick and the dying and buried the dead. She ends this tale of tragedy and heroism with simple words, "To have a friend you have to be one. So that's the way it is." Heidi and I nod and say, "Yes Grandma, that's right." And it is right.

Late afternoon now. Time for tea and "Handy Self Cake" and then we depart. Grandma worries if people stay too late; night driving concerns her. All these years and she's scarcely reconciled to the automobile. As for airplanes, "You'd never get me in one of those things. Never. Right here I'm gonna stay. Nobody will ever get me out of this place." Nobody will. Who would dare to try?

Home is a beloved landscape located in a historic time and space and in inner space. Homelessness is an absence, a fissure, where a rich and particular world ought to be. Intimate spaces, intimate places, my corner of the world. Home is the particular domain of intimacy, a landscape in which rich emotion, "psychic weight," is dominant. Yet home implodes: images of home are carried with us, out into a world we experience as alien or feel more or less at home in. Countries become homelands. Nations are conceived as large and frequently warring families. The universe itself may take on a fierce and alien hue—cosmic homelessness, black holes in space compressing, entrapping, making things disappear. Or the sense of an ordered world, a cosmic meaningfulness may predominate because God, in the words of Albert Einstein, "does not play dice with the universe."

Perhaps if we understand what it is to be "at home" in a beloved landscape, concrete and particular, we can understand intimacy as the content of a particular kind of relation that such a landscape makes possible. Gaston Bachelard might call this "topoanalysis," "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives." The house, the image of home, draws things unto itself; it encloses. Home both constrains and "makes possible"—this it has in common with other complex cultural forms. Home is an intensely inhabited space. It is the evocative memory of that intensity in space that forms the basis of "home" as time remembered (time past) and as time present (psychic time).

There is, there must be, something "natural" about the way in which human beings have, in every culture, every place, every time, set about creating homes for themselves: protected spaces within which the shape of their face-to-face relations could be structured and given form and texture. In Mary Midgeley's words, the notion of being "at home" is actually a rather modest idea. "It does not mean having an environment that has been especially designed for you. It means having one where you belong." And human beings cannot belong just any place, for human beings start out their lives as helpless, dependent creatures who need protected spaces and places in order to grow up at all. The original image of the "abandoned" child is of a child "exposed," left on a hillside to starve, to perish from the elements, to be eaten by wild animals. A child without a home, homelessness, exposure, abandonment—the powerful themes and images cluster together. That they do so speaks to something very primitive, very deep; it goes to the core of what it means to be a human person and to have a human culture.

Home is specific. Homes speak to, and of, our need for roots. Uprootedness, like homelessness, signifies the death of the spirit, the travail of the body, the curse of history. We require the rootedness that the form and idea of home provides in order to grow up with a sense of ourselves as particular, unique, and worthy beings, and, ideally, to see others as our fellows, not enemies, not foes, not that which stands in our way and must be destroyed. For the bitterly homeless are disruptive; they would destroy that which they can feel only as an absence, a negation of self. We know that it is only through the child's special relationships to specific others (the family, in the home) that he or she can later identify with and reach out to others—"enhouse" a wider universe, "familiarize" a social space that stretches beyond the walls and doors and windows of this house, this home, these particular people.

The home is a work of culture. It *is* culture—one of the forms within which culture itself takes shape. How does this work? The home is a particular and specific place; an incubating chamber, a launching pad, at times a prison. But it is necessary—as necessary to the creation of a *human* life, to the possibility of intimacy as life lived rather than longed-for, as the air we breathe. Some people are very unlucky in their homes. Some homes are battlegrounds rather than nurturing spaces. But this is the human condition, to be struggled against in its particular abuses, but no more to be lamented as a misfortune than is the fact that the sun fails to shine 24 hours a day. Midgeley writes:

> Some people do feel that the proper thing would

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> be to bring children up without a culture till they came to years of discretion, and then let them choose. This would mean bringing children up without a home; without intimacy, which gets under the skin, penetrates, shapes and forms the very tissue and fiber, muscle and sinew, of our being. But children who are held apart from life, or rushed from one set of people to another, no fixed abode, modern homelessness as the frenetic race between houses, temporary watering holes, do not become exceptionally capable of choosing. You can choose only between given alternatives, and to grasp any alternative you need years of acclimatization and practice in choosing from one particular set, in seeing what choices amount to. *And to need to learn to hold on to something. All this is not a misfortune*. A culture is a way of awakening our faculties. People proficient in one culture can usually make some sense of another. There is no prison. We can always walk on if we want to enough. What we cannot do is something which is no loss—namely, be nobody and nowhere. [Emphasis hers].

Nobody and nowhere. Searching for intimacy, never to find it because it requires a home. Our need for a home should guide us, should tell us something about ourselves, above what happens to us when familiar landscapes disappear—the disorientation, the shock, the sense that I come from "nowhere" when my home is "gone" give us further knowledge of ourselves as *home bodies*.

Robbed of memory, dislocated in time, the history of our real intimate memories comes to seem abstract. We find it hard to call them our own. We find it hard to call anything our own, to connect with anyone because the spirit has not been, or has not remained, enhoused. Home "makers" make possible a certain sort of love and that love is at the basis of human culture, the work of Eros, not the destruction of Thanatos. This is a recognition that Antonio Gramsci seems to have come to toward the end of his life when he wrote,

> How many times have I wondered if it is really possible to forge links with a mass of people when one has never had strong feelings for anyone, not even one's parents; if it is possible to love a collectivity when one has not been deeply loved oneself, by individual human creatures. Hasn't this had some effect on my life as a militant, has it not tended to make me sterile and reduce my quality as a revolutionary by making everything a matter of intellect, or mere magical calculation.

We need to reclaim home as a special social space that makes possible a wider civil life. Without this immediate and particular home the human spirit becomes a restless and dangerous creature seeking victims. That destructiveness is our best clue to the lacuna where home ought to be and the black hole in mind and spirit that it is. If we lack the reliable knowledge of self and other that home, and its intimacy, is capable of providing, we will never be "at home" in the larger world, we will never understand, nor be able to interpret, the expressions and actions, words and deeds, of others. If nobody in particular has been family, no one can be truly familiar. Without knowledge firsthand of what home stands for we would all become flailing and formless beasts rampaging outside the corral rather than grazing, together, within it.

Individuals need the particular spirit of the Pentates to breathe cultural life into them as individuals and send them on their way—away from home but not into a homeless world. For home becomes an inner landscape, and we can reach out to enclose others within that landscape rather than to shut them out, shunt them aside, or kill them, if necessary, if they come too near, or seem too alien.

The first home: where hearth is, and heart too. But the heart is also at home in that culture with which we are on intimate terms. This is our own culture, most of the time, though there are some who feel alienated from the cultural homes their own nations or countries or people provide and offer. Alienation, anomie; two markers of the modern condition. (No doubt markers of every previous epoch as well, but alienation and anomie are the flip side of our mass, reckless, rootless search for intimacy. They describe us; intimacy defines what we want. But who knows what we need?)

The term my grandmother uses to describe her people and herself is *unsere Leute*, our people, a people, in her case, without a country but with a distinctive and authentic historic identity. She would never see herself as (could not see herself, could not be on intimate terms with) some abstraction like "class"; always her "peoplehood" is paramount. "Our people's" way of life was threaded through and through by a populist pietism—a deeply rooted animus against experts ("big shots," to my Grandma) and the too powerful ("pride goeth before a fall and some of them guys are gonna fall hard, just you wait"), and the too rich ("It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God"). This pietism cautioned against judging things by appearance only; stressed responsibility to and for my life as a social life lived among others towards whom I had duties and responsibilities; advocated going the "extra mile" (the Good Samaritan parable here) and tempering justice with mercy ("the Prodigal Son" comes in at this point).

Grandma is on intimate terms with the culture of *unsere Leute*. Then she enters another culture, one in which market images of human beings as calculators of marginal utility prevails. None of the values of "our people" mesh neatly with the needs of capitalism; indeed, they clash at nearly every point along the way. This is the clash of truly intimate cultures—organic communities composed of face-to-face relations, both tight and restrictive, solid and nurturing—with the dissolving acids of modernity. The ties of such communities were seen, by those philosophies that spun off (and out of control) from Enlightenment rationalism and 19th-century historic myths of progress, as precisely what we all needed to be "liberated from." Such enlightened, progressive beings would be "at home" in the wider universe; they needed no particular place, no particular space: they would be at home in the universal ether, in a deracinated universal consciousness. For my grandmother

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the "I" of the self was always a "we," located within a larger web of intimate human ties and those responsibilities that, for her, flowed from such ties. She can no more think of herself out of the tissue of *unsere Leute* than she can fly. These ties of community were much eroded and altered by the forces of liberalism and capitalism that emerged historically in tandem and that realized, in practice, awesome possibilities for good and ill unthinkable in older social worlds.

What was forgotten was that social bonds of particular and intimate kinds structure human lives; that true human communication, and therefore human wit and warmth and intelligence, develops only where there are these long-standing deep relationships, only where there are homes for the heart. This is the basis of community; this *is* community —commitment, over time, in settings that include (though they may not be defined exclusively by) intimate relations, commitments, possibilities, responsibilities. There is no way to derive a true home—either in the particular or the more general sense of a community—through rational individualism and the image of totally self-reliant, totally independent human beings that emerged with the rise of capitalism and modern relations of exchange. There is what political theorists have called a "possessive" quality in the conception of the individual as it emerged in the West in the past three hundred years. The individual, stripped of his or her intimate ties (and thereby, it turns out, of both home and culture), was viewed as the owner of himself and, in our day, herself. This individual is free only insofar as he or she is the sole "proprietor" of self, free from dependence upon others, free to do or become anything so long as no external constraint forbids it. Society got construed as the aggregate of such free individuals engaging in relations of mutually beneficial exchange through utilitarian calculations and power strategies. The social *contract*, which cannot allow for the particular commitments of intimacy, supplanted the older notion of the social *compact*, which created places and spaces for intimacy.

The social compact is a very different notion from that of contract and it is a vision that has a lingering hold, in America, on working-class, religious, and rural culture. A compact is not a contingent agreement having instrumental aims (intimacy cannot be reduced to stratagems, tricks, manipulations, and wiles), but a solemn commitment to create something "new." This "new" group gets forged on the heart of a presumed and lived intimacy out of disparate elements—a family, a community, a polity—whose individual members could not remain "as before" once they became part of an exquisitely social mode of existence. The notion of the social compact is of a community whose members share purposes and values that are enforced by moral suasion, not by coercion or manipulation. The idea of the compact, suffused with possibilities and requirements for intimate relations, challenges contractual images that dominate in our day and propel us into the world on a search for intimacy that, by definition, cannot take root in the soil of modern dislocation. The compact locates the human being within a historic and communal framework bounded by birth and death.

Unlike the picture of reality of social contract theorists, the compact ideal takes account of the varying needs of human beings over a lifetime. Contract theory and possessive individualism, however, are static views; they revolve around consenting, choosing, rational adults who, in principle, could love everybody equally (or not) and could lead a life having no preference among them. Such beings "may be in a sense conceivable to us, but they are certainly not imaginable." That is why the form of intimacy dissolves when we grab books that tell us how to "get it" or "do it" or "have it." For intimacy cannot, simply, be had. It isn't a good on a shelf ready for the plucking and the buying. It emerges in and through our culture or it emerges not at all.

Having a culture and feeling intimate with it, however, does not mean feeling at "one"; that is, one can feel at home (I am an American), yet not fully share the prevailing social identity, perhaps because one fears that total absorption into the dominant culture will erode the terms on which one defines oneself in a particular subculture or set of social relation (families, ethnic groups, *unsere Leute*, for example). Or perhaps because the culture no longer sustains powerful self-definitions. Having shaped and formed a certain social identity, so that one feels "at home" in it, suddenly the terms shift. We awaken to the shock that either our selves are no longer on the same intimate terms with the culture that initially spawned us, or that we can no longer feel at home *with* those selves given shifts in cultural trajectory, force, and impetus. ◈

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Emily Dickinson Leaves a Message to the World, Now That Her Homestead in Amherst Has An Answering Machine

by X.J. Kennedy

Because I could not stop for Breath
Past Altitudes—of Earth—
Upon a reel of Tape I leave
Directions to my Hearth—

For All who will not let Me lie
Unruffled in escape—
Speak quickly—or I'll intercept
Your Message with—a Beep.

Though often I had dialed and rung
The Bastion of the Bee—
The Answer I had hungered for
Was seldom Home—to Me—

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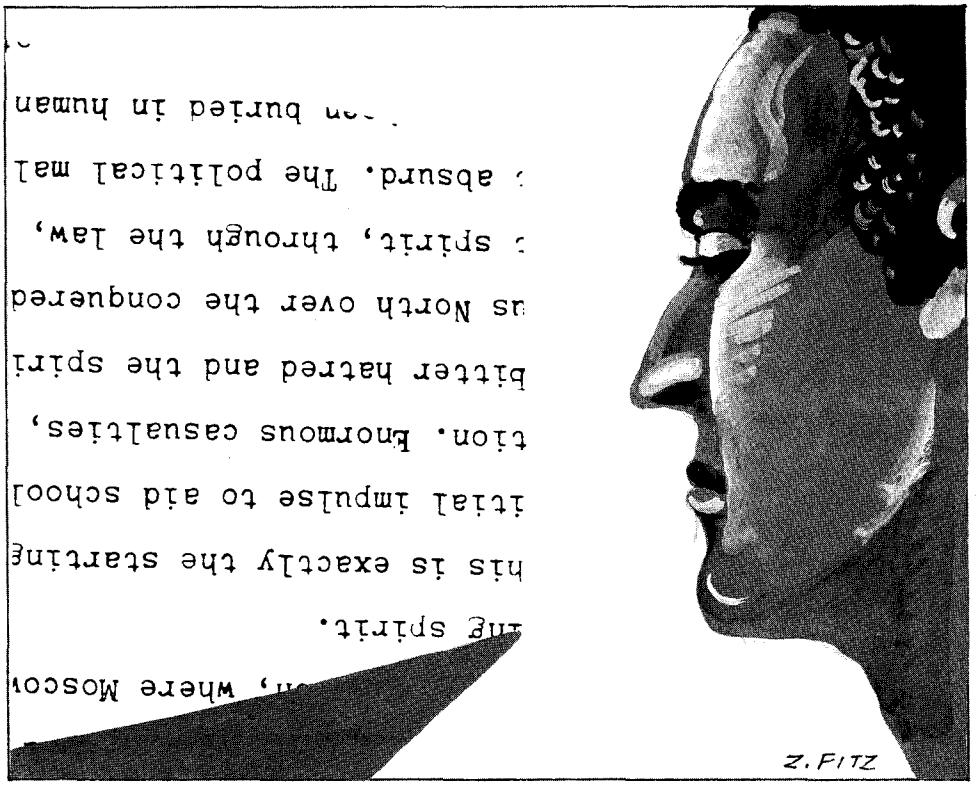
Education for a Conquered Nation

by John Chodes



Declining test scores. Illiterate, spiritless, and passive graduates who have little motivation to find a job or succeed. Youngsters with no skills to compete in the marketplace. This is the tragic record of American public education, after billions of dollars and 127 years of direct federal funding.

The results seem more appropriate for a rebellious Soviet-bloc satellite nation, where Moscow wants to break its freedom-loving spirit.

And in fact this is exactly the starting point for Washington's initial impulse to aid schooling. Civil war. Massive destruction. Enormous casualties, higher than World War II. Bitter hatred and the spirit of vendetta by the victorious North over the conquered Confederate enemy. And that spirit, through the law, lives on today. This is not absurd. The political malice of the 1860's has long since been buried in human terms. But not in the law, which has a strange life of its own. It has an unswerving trajectory that can go on indefinitely without deflecting from its original mandate, even when that purpose is long extinct.

This is the case now. Children of the 1980's are being given an education that was deemed appropriate for an 1860's Confederate child. We will never recover from our literacy tailspin until we perceive this and understand Uncle Sam's original motive for aiding schools.

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The Morrill Act

Washington jumped squarely into education in 1862. The Civil War was raging. The Union Army had been suffering major reverses. Robert E. Lee maneuvered to bring the war to the North, and the Union was not sure it would win. In such an atmosphere the Morrill Act passed Congress. This was the closest that Washington had ever come to direct aid to education. Its stated objective was to fund colleges that teach agriculture and mechanic arts, via money raised through federal land-grant sales. The true objective was to bring the Northern perspective to the reconquered areas of the South, to teach the rebel's children "respect for national authority"—to break their rebellious spirit forever. The three R's had absolutely nothing to do with this landmark bill.

Senator J.P. Wickersham stated this clearly in 1865: "What can education do for the non-slave-holding whites of the South? The great majority are deplorably ignorant. . . . It is this ignorance that enables the rebel leaders to create a prejudice in the minds of this class of persons against the North and to induce them to enlist in their armies. As long as they are ignorant they will remain tools of political

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demagogues and therefore be incapable of self-government. They must be educated. . . . A republican form of government cannot long last without providing a system of free schools. . . . Ignorant voters endanger liberty. With free schools in the South there could have been no rebellion in the future . . . when our youth learn to read similar books, similar lessons, we shall become one people, possessing one organic nationality."

Senator Justin Morrill, in explaining his authorship of the Morrill Act, said, "The role of the national government is to mold the character of the American people."

All this sounds similar to the Aryan dream. But not everyone believed that spiritual dictatorship was the best course to follow. When Justin Morrill first introduced his bill in 1857, Congress passed it, but President Buchanan vetoed it, saying, "I deem it unconstitutional. It would contribute to the deterioration of the relations between states and federal government."

With civil war and the expulsion of Southern Democrats, the act became law easily. Seemingly innocuous, in reality it was a war measure, education fused with military and political strategy. The land-grants had hidden strings; Washington controlled curriculum. To insure a uniformly nationalized, anti-Southern slant, land and money could be taken from one state and given to another. Morrill also said his bill provided "something . . . for better support of Christian Churches," a clearly unconstitutional act, binding state and church together.

Freedmen's Bureau Schools

1866. The war was over. Millions of former slaves wandered around the South, without work and without the skills and education to survive on their own. Congress created a Freedmen's Bureau to ease their transition to citizens.

But martial law, via radical Congressional Reconstruction policies, sat squarely on the shattered South. The Radicals enmity meant "turning Dixie into an obedient colony." This pushed the Freedmen's Bureau under the War Department instead of the civil Treasury Department, where it was originally intended to go, uniting emancipation with the brutality of martial law. The Radicals saw the bureau as a tool through which the ex-Confederacy could be politically and economically neutered forever and national power centered in the northern industrial states—the Radicals' own states.

The Freedmen's Bureau had its own military court system which overruled all local civil courts. Bureau courts twisted decisions to fit War Department policies. The Supreme Court said this was unconstitutional in time of peace. But the bureau went on, unabated, behind the cloak of martial law.

Freedmen's Bureau courts loosely interpreted the wartime Confiscation Acts and the Morrill land-grant statutes to expropriate massive tracts of choice plantations for private gain and land swindles. The bureau deflated real estate values by the use of public auctions where the prices were bid down to a fraction of their true worth. This way the bureau bought what it could not steal. All this was done in the name of "redistribution" for the Negroes.

The Freedmen's Bureau had a big education budget. This was the first direct federal aid to schooling. The need to create school buildings fast, without wasting time and money to build them, led to another round of mass confiscation of property, this time in urban areas. President Andrew Johnson said this rape was unconstitutional. But it went on unabated, under the urgency of martial law. In three years the bureau built 630 school houses and placed hundreds more in seized buildings.

Gradually the Freedmen's Bureau became a shadow government in the South, with more real power via its military backing than either the local civil or carpetbag state governments.

Through this monstrosity federal school aid poured. At first, only soldiers taught. The soldier-teacher obeyed bureau policies via the War Department and the Radical Congress. The three R's took a backseat; destruction of the Democratic Party was the highest objective. New textbooks were created and all subjects taught from this perspective.

When Negroes got the vote, John Alvord, the bureau's superintendent of education, said: "Freedmen must be elevated, both in intelligence and character, to guide them in the right use of the ballot and to save them from being dupes of demagogues." Demagogues were Democrats.

A Radical politician said: "Republicans notice that where there has been the most schooling since the war, the freedmen are surest for our Party." Few Republican organizers were more active in the South than superintendents and inspectors of freedmen's schools. Negro schoolhouses became Republican Party headquarters and sites for progressively greater political activity.

As a result of this perversion of education, it was soon obvious that a glorious graft-filled carpetbag career could spring open via teaching. Loyal bureau men were placed in state legislatures.

To the naive, who thought that schools were for learning, there was a price to pay. Reverend Duncan was the bureau's chief officer in Florida. He had the audacity to refuse to use his school system to distribute copies of a Radical speech by Congressman Thad Stevens, who proposed to pay the war debt by confiscating more rebel property. Duncan lost his job.

The bureau's mandate was only to teach blacks. But it was imperative to change the values of the Southern whites. There was less concern for their racism than for their ability to make war again. Thus, contrary to the law, classes were forcibly integrated, not to promote healthy race relations, but to have captive whites to brainwash into being "loyal to authority."

Of course this caused social unrest, which justified a continued military presence, continued funding of the Freedmen's Bureau, and continued domination of the South. Chaos, not peace and racial harmony, was the objective of the bureau.

Bureau education led to the same kind of dependency for the former slaves that they experienced on the plantation: control of their morals, views, and life-styles. Superintendent Alvord organized the "Lincoln Temperance Association," used force, violence, and jail to end their "superstitions, immorality," and improper manners. Alvord's "Vanguard of Freedom" forced freedmen to pledge against tobacco, alcohol, and profanity.

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Such policies showed that the bureau—and Congress—believed that the freedmen were incapable of making it on their own. This enforced dependence required perpetual funding, which meant a continued federal presence.

In an annual report Alvord showed the degree of control the bureau had over freedmen's lives. In addition to teaching "sewing, straw-braiding, repairing, cutting, making garments," his idea of education meant "the improvement of home life and family condition, the encouragement of intelligent industry, thrift and the accumulation of property, the establishment of families in homesteads," and chastity and marital fidelity. Alvord hoped to take girls from their homes and establish seminaries where refined virtue could be taught to them.

General Armstrong, who founded the Hampton Institute via a bureau subsidy, was a paternalist in the most literal sense. He regarded freedmen as children who would improve their socioeconomic status only if they allowed benevolent whites to assist them. Henry Turner, who headed a private aid group, said: "Colored children are being taught to remember 'you are Negroes. Your place is behind.'" When Turner asked a bureau teacher about higher learning, the answer was: "Oh, the colored children are not prepared for these studies yet. They are too ignorant. It will take time enough to talk about that, years from this time."

June 1868. The Freedmen's Bureau's "education" efforts paid off. Seven Southern states were readmitted to Congress. Twelve of the 14 senators were Republicans. Thirty-two of the 34 representatives were Republicans.

November 1868: Ulysses S. Grant won the national election by the narrowest margin: 309,000 votes. But he received 450,000 Negro votes. The bureau had kept the Radicals in power.

As a result, even a Northern Republican, Eber Ward, shuddered. "The Freedmen's Bureau, that was designed as a most beneficent engine of good, has been so perverted from its original object that it ought to be abolished at once."

The Bureau of Education and the Census of 1870

1869. Freedmen's Bureau funding was withering as relations between North and South inched toward normalization. The only money remaining was to keep "common schools in country places and to cooperate with public school officers in rendering effective the public school system of the states." So, even as it sank, the bureau's role expanded into the Southern civil apparatus.

As he resigned in October 1870, John Alvord said that "educational initiatives must be continued. The masses of the freedmen are ignorant." Congress obliged. A low-profile Bureau of Education was created within the Interior Department. Its mandate seemed harmless. "Collecting such statistics and facts as to show the condition and progress of education in the several states." But it did have a clear objective—to focus its statistics on the South, to guarantee a federal presence there. Its second commissioner was John Eaton, a famed carpetbagger, long associated with the excesses of the Freedmen's Bureau.

Eaton soft-pedaled the Bureau of Education's role, saying it should do nothing "calculated to decrease local or individual effort for education." Yet he also pointedly said that the bureau was designed to be "an essential and permanent part of reconstruction," as if it would go on forever. Moreover, the statistics collected would be used to prove whether the Morrill land-grant money had been "spent wisely." If not, "the government may take such exceptional action as exceptional circumstances may require . . . for the assurance of a republican form of government."

So the statistics could be generated to provoke such exceptional action by proving that the South was not educating its young.

1870. The once-a-decade census was underway. The Bureau of Education "worked with" the census field people to get the correct numbers. One contemporary source said that "data primarily from the 1870 and 1880 census cannot be considered as accurate, in view of the inadequate census techniques and unreliable appraisals of property values."

The techniques were inadequate because wide areas of the South were still under martial law and census-takers could not canvas door-to-door unless accompanied by Union troops, whose presence insured the "correct" numbers. Property appraisals were unreliable since enormous tracts had been confiscated by the Freedmen's Bureau and sold at auction to speculators or friends or freedmen at a fraction of their true worth. Land valuation was critical to education. It related to taxation for school construction.

As a result of this collusion, the numbers looked like this: Northern and Western states spent $2,225 per child in taxable wealth; the South, $851. Further, illiteracy was defined by the bureaus of Education and the Census as "cannot write."

By this definition the North had 7.7 percent illiteracy; the Pacific area, 15 percent. The South, 42 percent. But a second question, "cannot read," was discarded. This question made the numbers much closer.

These statistics caused a national sensation. Congressmen, particularly Radical Republicans, clamored for legislation to pour massive federal dollars into the South to correct the deficiency. Yet, in the heated Congressional debates that followed, even the detractors of federal aid didn't see the fraud behind the numbers.

First, the census questions could only be answered by a head of household or someone 21 years or older. These people were the illiterates. Since most children finished school at 15 in that era, the questions (particularly when fused with "illiteracy by voters") had been skewed to that group who would never benefit by aid. Yet it was this group that was paraded as a conclusive argument for federal support.

President Ulysses S. Grant referred to the census data in a message to Congress. "I recommend a Constitutional amendment . . . making it the duty of the several states to establish and forever maintain free public schools . . . [and] make education compulsory so far as to *deprive* all persons who *cannot read and write* from being voters after the year 1890."

In one move Grant could force Radical views down the throats of the South and disqualify half his political opposition.

The census statistics present a barbaric, indifferent South. But that is implausible. Several prewar Southern states had the finest locally funded school systems in the country.

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North Carolina is a prime example. And all Reconstruction state constitutions had a clause creating public, tax-supported education for all children, regardless of race.

The Reverend A.D. Mayo was a Radical Republican and an executive in the quasi-private Peabody Fund. This was a gigantic multimillion dollar school endowment, matching local Southern tax monies. Mayo was considered one of the top education experts in the country. He hated the South and dreamed of reforming it in the image of New England, but even he had to admit that the Southern states focused more effort on schooling than the North. "In many of the Southern states the school tax is higher than in the Northern states that maintain a splendid school system."

Dr. Mayo's views were sacrosanct in Congress. He had a huge impact on legislative efforts and national policy. He pointed out, using census data and his own personal experience, that the *rural* South was mired in extreme illiteracy. But it was the policies of the Peabody Fund and the Freedmen's Bureau that created this. Both agencies focused their efforts and money on high-density urban areas to more easily control the student population. Rural families were pushed into the cities to get "better" federal schooling for their children. This denuded the countryside of most school-age children. Then the consequences were hurled back into the South's face as proof of its incompetence.

The census data of 1870 through 1890 projected the same dismal story for the South. Stagnating illiteracy. Slight gains here and there, a hopeful state here and there, but overall, failure. No one seemed to notice that the Census Bureau was mixing apples and oranges, presenting long-term trends based on unrelated statistics.

To accurately project a trend the same questions must be asked each time. But the census questions kept subtly changing.

In 1870, one question read: "Attended school within the year?" In 1880 that became, "Attended school within the census year, June 1-May 30?" This is significant. The national average number of days of school attendance in any year was about one hundred. The "when" of those hundred days fluctuated widely by region, depending on crop planting and harvesting seasons and weather. The change in the question helped keep the literacy numbers bunched higher in the North, decade after decade.

In 1870 and 1880 the questions "cannot read/cannot write?" were asked. 1890: "Able to read/able to write?" replaced it. These are very different questions. Again, this resulted in Northern numbers remaining higher. Major school legislation was proposed based on those statistics.

The Hoar and Blair Bills

George Hoar, Republican representative from Massachusetts, introduced the first civil peacetime bill for direct federal aid to common schools in 1870. It was pure tyranny. Via direct federal tax, funds would be distributed to the states based on census illiteracy data.

Hoar said: "It will compel the states to do what they will not do and to do for them what they cannot do." Hoar rationalized his bill in terms of "intelligent voting." He said the Democrats opposed it because "that party knows that the greater the ignorance of the masses the greater its political power, hence it denounces the light of education." Another side effect of the Hoar Bill was "extinguishing Catholic or religious education and to form one homogeneous American people after the New England evangelical type." The bill passed the House but was narrowly beaten back in the Senate.

By the late 1870's direct military rule over the South was waning. The new Republican President, Rutherford B. Hayes—who won his election only because of massive military intervention at the Southern polls—was committed to the same kind of federal extortion in the classroom. He requested funds from Congress for that purpose. "To perpetuate the Union and abolish slavery was the work of the war. To educate the uneducated is the appropriate work of the peace." Behind the noble words emerged a plan to permanently enslave the South. Senator Henry Blair put Hayes' plan into legislative form.

The Blair Bill, "for the temporary support of common schools," provoked a decade-long struggle in Congress, as the danger of national aid became clearer to the public. Like its predecessors, Blair linked federal aid to illiteracy, making the South the greatest recipient. Blair went further than any legislator had dared before. He confessed that his plan

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would not be temporary. And it was "necessary to prevent the growth of illiteracy and *anarchy* in the *North*, especially in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York." This would spread mind-control nationally.

President Hayes wanted to enlighten the public about the virtues of the Blair Bill. He asked an old friend, Albion Tourgee, to write and speak toward that goal. Tourgee, a former carpetbagger Supreme Court justice in North Carolina, hated the South. He had been called "Tourgee the Infamous" and "Tourgee the Cain-Marked."

Tourgee spent the entire decade fanatically promoting the Blair Bill. "Make the spelling book the sceptor of national power" became his theme. The Blair Bill would achieve his dream; the destruction of the South's moral and cultural traditions and the Democratic Party into the indefinite future. Tourgee's novel, *Bricks Without Straw*, was less fiction than a diatribe promoting federal school funding. It was a major best-seller.

Opposing Blair and Tourgee almost single-handedly was Edward Clark, the editorial writer for *The New York Evening Post*. Throughout the 1880's Clark showed the American public the dangers. He alone saw how the census data had been twisted and misinterpreted by Dr. Mayo. "Illiteracy," he wrote, "is bad but it is not the worst thing. There is nothing more demoralizing to a state than the assumption of its own duty by the authorities in Washington . . . unless it is arrested there is . . . grave danger for our future as a nation."

Clark's editorials and Tourgee's own zealotry killed Blair. It had passed the Senate in 1884, 1886, and 1888, and each time narrowly failed the House. But Tourgee could not support it as it stood, since each state would distribute the federal funds. Tourgee saw the South as hopelessly reactionary, and would not trust it to use the money in the correct way. Tourgee insisted on bypassing state authority. Since this proved impossible, he withdrew his support, and the Blair Bill died.

The Hatch Act

While the nation's attention was focused on the struggle over Blair, a smaller, apparently inoffensive education bill glided through Congress without difficulty. It passed because the appropriations were miniscule compared to Blair, and it did not concentrate on regional literacy. But in the long run the Hatch Act proved devastating.

The 1887 Hatch Act, or "Agricultural Experimental Station Act," seemed to be a simple subsidy to land-grant schools to improve farming techniques. Wrong. In the never-never world of Congressional double-talk, "agricultural" specifically referred to public lands used for the land-grant schools. It did not mean crop or livestock experimentation. Hatch meant school experimentation related to human behavior. Nationally. An amendment to Hatch (the Purnell Act) clearly expresses this. It "extends the areas of investigation by the experimental stations to include . . . *sociological* investigations as have for their purpose the development and improvement of the rural *home* and rural *life*." This is not about soybean production. This is about human behavior.

These events of more than a century ago have greater meaning for today. Mssrs. Morrill, Blair, and Hatch would be pleased with the 1980's. It has taken a long time, but their ideals have come to pass. Like their hope for docile Confederate children, our children respect national authority, are passive, have little motivation to succeed, and only the skills to get menial jobs.

So it is as true today as in 1877, when a Baltimore school board president said: "There are those who hold that republics can be saved by the general diffusion of education. But the most effectively despotic government in Europe—Germany—is the one in which education is most diffused."

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Prodigal Son

by Fred Chappell

"Children begin by loving their parents. After a time they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them."

—Oscar Wilde

Collected Poems
by Louis Simpson
New York: Paragon House;
416 pp., $24.95

◆

Louis Simpson stands as an easy example of the poet divided, whose best talents and strongest predilections are at odds with one another. He takes Walt Whitman as spiritual father and his relationship with the figure of Whitman is as troubled and ambiguous as any son's might be with a blood father. He names W.H. Auden as his *bête noire*, although his own best wit and stylishness are closer to Auden's nice effects than to Whitman's woolly dithyrambs.

But perhaps it is not the contrast between the two poets that so exercises him. Simpson struggles with a problem of cultural identity; he has for a long time been trying to define what an American is and then to become one. Whitman represents America, Auden Europe. Louis Simpson's father was British, his mother a Russian Jew, and the lad spent his early years in Jamaica, separated from his parents. In his autobiography, *North of Jamaica*, he identifies America as the place where Mummy was, "a place with tall buildings called skyscrapers" where the inhabitants "ate sugar and bananas."

Already in his miniature verse drama of 1949, "The Arrivistes," a character observes: "This European scene / Is like a comedy, each age an act / In one old plot the public know / By heart." Already in the poem "West" he dreams of "Ranching in Bolinas, that's the life," and in "Mississippi" of rafting down the river with Huck and Jim, "Where old St. Joe slid on the water lights / And on into the dark, diminishing." Already in "Orpheus in America" a sweaty Americanization of European tradition is attempted; "Goodbye to Arcady! / Another world is here, a greener Thrace!"

Yet now when we read the poems of his early period the more European ones seem superior. "The Flight to Cytherea," a homage to Watteau, Baudelaire, and Laforgue, is more successful than "A Farm in Minnesota" or "American Preludes." A straightforward pastiche of Laforgue, "Laertes in Paris," has good moments; the clumsily Yeatsian "The Goodnight" has interesting rhymes, at least; and "The Bird" is as good as most of the ballads

Fred Chappell is professor of English at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. His most recent book of poetry is Source, *published by Louisiana State University Press.*

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by Bertolt Brecht upon which it is modeled. And among these early poems we spot another mentor, too; "Invitation to a Quiet Life" shows more than a hint of W.H. Auden, and "Carentan O Carentan" is imitation pure and naked.

O Captain, show us quickly
Our place upon the map.
But the Captain's sickly,
And taking a long nap.

Well, what's wrong with that? From whom will a young poet learn if not from the most influential voice of that decade?

Nothing is wrong, nothing at all, if the borrower is gracious enough to acknowledge his debt and to say, as he nowhere does, that once upon a time when he was green and lyric and impressionable the poet W.H. Auden helped to shape the psyche of the organism that calls itself Louis Simpson. He has deigned to praise the youthful Auden for inventing "a compact, elliptical language that was strikingly original" and for being "obscure and prophetic." But he believes that because Auden wrote no confessional poems his work came to lack real substance. "His habitual concealment of his deepest life led him to write in a trivial manner until—at an age when Hardy and Yeats wrote their greatest poems—he was writing light verse."

The review from which I quote these supercilious remarks, "The Split Lives of W.H. Auden," belongs to Simpson's middle period. During this time, the 1970's, Simpson had espoused the notions of poets like Stanley Plumly, Donald Hall, and especially Robert Bly, and believed that poetry had to eschew rhyme and meter and any diction not colloquial. It was to tell dark transcendental secrets of the soul; it was to employ "deep images." He exhibits with ecstatic approval an example from Bly of such stuff: "The lamplight falls on all fours in the grass."

The poem most symptomatic of this middle period is "Walt Whitman at Bear Mountain," in which Simpson carries on a plausible dialogue with a statue of this American bard who has troubled his thoughts for such a long time. "Where are you, Walt?" He complains that the dazzling visions of the future America Whitman promised are abandoned and desecrated. "The Open Road goes to the used-car lot." The mage replies, with a sense of proportion and a humor often lacking in his own poems, that he had not attempted to prophesy or to lay down laws. "I freely confess I am wholly disreputable."

Then the poem breaks down. Some pickpockets and salesmen enter, and then a storekeeper and a housewife are named but not located spatially, and America is unburdened of its "grave weight." This incoherence is concluded with a deep image that Simpson has avowed his pride in: "And the angel in the gate, the flowering plum, / Dances like Italy, imagining red."

The fact that this image makes no sense is, in Simpson's eyes, perhaps the larger part of its glory. He would say of it what he says of Bly's work: "If you are sold on the English department, then this poetry is not for you. You would have a devil of a time trying to explicate it according to the principles of Brooks-and-Warren." But the truth is that it is only in the murkier recesses of English departments that one can find people silly enough to imagine that a poem will be good only so long as Robert Penn Warren cannot understand it.

Beneath his confusions and pretensions there is a streak of thoughtfulness in Simpson, and it is not surprising that he got fed up with the woozy word-games of this period and desired to write poems about *real* reality, the kind of reality novelists write about, those blokes without fancy language, fancy ideas.

So these days we get poems like "Ed," in which a man drinks too much and wishes he had married a cocktail waitress. Then there is "Bernie," in which a free-spirited fellow writes a successful movie. We get lots of poems with stanzas like this one:

She is in the middle
of preparing dinner. Tonight
she is trying an experiment:
Hal Bourgonyaual—
Fish-Potato Casserole.
She has cooked and drained
the potatoes
and cut the fish in pieces.
Now she has to "mash
potatoes,
add butter and hot milk,"
et cetera.

This is camp. It is almost exactly the same kind of camp that Simpson finds the elder Auden guilty of writing. Simpson once announced his intention to write real poems about real people who live in the real world. There are undoubtedly real women who assemble real fish potato casseroles, but they are still waiting for their real poem.

The later poems of Simpson and of Auden boil down to a sort of weakly ironic sociology. In his poem "The *Foggy Lane*," Simpson reports upon meeting a "radical" who "wanted to live in a pure world." He also met an insurance agent who claimed that he needed "more protection." The poet elects to join neither of these opposed forces of modern society, but to observe, instead, nature, "the pools made by the rain, / and wheel-ruts, and wet leaves, / and the rustling of small animals." But he only makes of himself a third kind of case history.

In 1955 I met W.H. Auden at a beer joint called Joe's Chili House in Durham, North Carolina. In the course of conversation he flashed, amusedly, an American academic idiom he had obviously acquired only recently. "What," he asked me, "is your major?" "Sociology," I replied, wondering if that mightn't be the case. He made no comment and I felt that I had not struck the right note. I tried a desperate little joke (Brash Freshman Banters Celebrated Poet). "Or maybe alcoholism," I said. "Well," said he, gazing at me with purblind seriousness, "that's certainly more respectable than sociology."

If, in their later years, Simpson and Auden begin to resemble one another just a little as the infection of sociology makes inroads upon their talents, it may behoove Simpson to show a little more charity toward his fellow *arriviste*. It is only circumstance that Auden is so much the more famous: the best Simpson is almost as good as the best Auden, and his worst is almost as bad as Auden's worst. And like all Americans, native or naturalized, they both have had to work hard to understand what the nation is that they belong to, and what it makes of them.

In this America, this wilderness
Where the axe echoes with a
lonely sound,
The generations labor to possess
And grave by grave we civilize
the ground. ◈

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The Deconstructive Lyric

by Paul Ramsey

"Poetry is certainly something more than good sense, but it must be good sense . . . just as a palace is more than a house, but it must be a house."
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Selected Poems II: Poems Selected & New 1976-1986
by Margaret Atwood
New York and Boston: Houghton Mifflin; 158 pp., $16.95 (cloth), $9.95 (paper)

Don't Look Back
by Dabney Stuart
Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press; 64 pp.

◆

Margaret Atwood writes in her poem "Mushrooms":

Here is the handful
of shadow I have brought back
to you,
this decay, this hope,
this mouth-
ful of dirt, this poetry.

Also in *Selected Poems II*, in "Five Poems for Grandmothers": "I make this charm / from nothing but paper; which is good / for exactly nothing." And in "Two-Headed Poems": "This is not a debate / but a duet / with two deaf singers."

Paul Ramsey is poet in residence and Guerry Professor of English at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.

Then, one might think, each singer may rejoice in his own singing, however much he mangles the tune, however inept the words, since he does not hear a thing. The singers hear nothing, mean little, and sing long. Some of the singers, with Heideggerian fervor, really mean nothing. Really, if there were a really. As Atwood puts it in "Notes Toward a Poem That Can Never Be Written": "this is the place that will finally defeat you / where the word *why* shrivels and empties / itself. This is famine."

Yes, it is, and an abundant famine, where many poets of our time starve, hallucinate, and insist on their hallucination of starvation.

The subject is despair, including the despair of any genuine knowledge or understanding whatever, the form unbuckled, the verse prose. The suffering entailed is often quite genuine, and I wish to speak charitably, but the aesthetic and moral and philosophical consequences are nonetheless to be justly deplored.

The historical causes and influences are long, sufficiently complex, and deficiently Romantic. The Romantics taught self-expression, the power of the self, the boundlessness of the self; the contemporary bearers of such tidings write of the collapse and fragmentation of self. Dabney Stuart in "Casting" in his book *Don't Look Back* (the book would not exist if it obeyed its title), writes "teach me to brew / my life . . . / and conjure, and construe/ . . . lost selves . . . / to love." I wish a good poet well; the lines are far from the exaltations of Romantic egoism. Wordsworth's "The Prelude," the search for a unified self and self-understanding, is the paradigm for much of contemporary poetry, though without Wordsworth's self-confidence and mastery of blank verse. The search becomes search without any real hope or even intent of arrival.

The Romantics taught freedom from "rules" and from genres, and exalted the shaping power of imagination, the human power that grandly perceives or maybe *creates* the beauty and excellence of its vision. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." "Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?"

Many modern poems vacillate between the grandeur of imagination and its falseness or uncertainty; many others deny the grandeur or any hope: a resultant rule is to write in the one genre, the deconstructive, nonverse lyric.

Kant taught that the mind consti-

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tutes reality, and he also sharply divided (on some days—Kant is a very elusive thinker) subject and object; and students of such teaching began to brood, "Suppose the mind gets it wrong? How on earth would we know? And isn't all value really subjective? Which is to say not really true?" (Kant taught that beauty is absolutely subjective and absolutely universal, but these students did not heed or buy that.) And isn't language of the Subject? How then can it really deal with the Object? And, besides, language is culturally derived, not objectively permanent, so isn't truth relative to different cultures, hence not really true? And so on.

A historical study—which this essay is mostly not—should certainly mention some other influences: Schopenhauer's redacting of Kant in Schopenhauer's view that the Noumenon, the really real, that which is not mere appearance, is Will; Hume's Fork—tuned from Kant's Subject and Object—dividing Fact and Value and fathering positivism; Nietzsche's radical skepticism, with his "whirling falsehood" all discourse reaches for; Wallace Stevens, with his poetic genius consumed by the subject of poetics, perpetually searching for and despairing of arriving at what might be a genuine poetry.

In any event, the deconstructive theories and practices are among us, so much so that theory for many means only *such* theory. Texts are about their own non-aboutness, and what gives the reader "infinite play" gives the reader no freedom whatever to interpret, since there can be no interpretation of evidence, no reason to choose one reading over another. Romantic freedom once more, as in the determinism and progressivism of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" and in various forms of volitionism from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on, becomes a psychological trap—the will is free to will whatever it wills to will, and has no grounds whatever, to do so. Will frets self, gnaws it away. Self stutters, doubts its viability or being; will wills on. And form is suspect. Or absent.

In *Selected Poems II* Margaret Atwood writes exclusively nonverse. This term is offered, descriptively, to mean "prose, which is not metrical verse or free verse, lineated by the author rather than the margin." This assumes that there is metrical verse, that there is genuine free verse, and that one can discriminate between those and nonverse. Metrical verse indisputably exists; genuine free verse is harder to define or identify with precision, but I can give some examples: the King James translation of the Psalms, Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," Theodore Roethke's "North American Sequence," Wallace Stevens's "Domination of Black," H.D.'s "Orchard," and William Carlos Williams's "Metric Figure" are beautifully verse. Atwood's work in this book, with the exception of a few passages, is simply prose, if often skillful prose.

Good writing can be done in nonverse, but a power is missing, and the lack matters.

Nonverse is very plainly compatible with the deconstructive lyric: the verse is de-constructed, that is, absent. Not all nonverse is deconstructive in theme or treatment; and some deconstructive lyrics—in which the impossibility of good poetry is presumed and in some ways exemplified—are in metrical verse, for instance Wallace Stevens's "The Comedian as the Letter C."

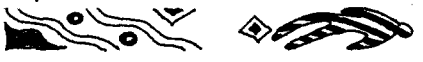
Negation is very much part of poetry. Pain, regret, shame, confusion, self-doubt, not excluding doubts of the power of poetry, have been always with us; tragedy is a chief form, not without reason. And poets love to flirt with the edges of language. Samuel Johnson wrote of Dryden, "He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle . . . [to] hover over the edge of unideal vacancy."

Still, the deconstructive lyric is very much of our modern age. And Atwood is an extreme case: her medium is nonverse, her themes overwhelmingly negative, her concern with the limits and failures—the non-being-ness—of poetry recurrent and self-undercutting. There are moments of tenderness, particularly in her lovely "Five Poems for Grandmothers," and some poetry for a daughter, but such moments are few and atypical.

She is also self-consciously feminist and thereby in a way political, but the nihilism outbids the politics. Her poem "Notes Toward a Poem That Can Never Be Written," which is, as the Stevensian title suggests, one of the most deconstructive of her poems, is dedicated to Carolyn Forché, and thus can be seen as nihilism opposing communism, if only because it finally opposes all meaningful human action.

Her political techniques are often crude and brutal and simple: the accumulation of examples of dire suffering (usually of women) to "prove" we are not told what, though there are hints and insinuations—the horridness of man, the futility of hope, the falsity of Christianity, the need for women to unite (the last is surprisingly rare).

Thus, in "Christmas Carols," the following examples are offered against Christianity and in contempt for the Virgin Mary: a woman thirty times raped and pregnant who committed suicide, a woman who died in an abortion, a woman who killed herself attempting a self-abortion, all the newborn children killed by their mothers in the 19th century, foxes eating their young. The conclusion of the poem is atypically, and not very convincingly, positive, looking toward "the day / when every child is a holy birth." The poem achieves a cruel power, and a sense of desperate suffering, but is logically opaque, incapable of distinctions. What of women, for instance, who refused to have abortions, because they already believed that childbirth is holy?



Mostly she makes her case by examples, but occasionally she argues, as in the following graceful and touching sentence (also in "Notes"): "The facts of this world seen clearly / are seen through tears; / why tell me then / there is something wrong with my eyes?"

A good argument, up to a point, and Vergil would agree, the *lacrimae rerum*, the tears of things, being a living part of many good poems. Tears, literally and as synecdoche or metaphor, are a just response to the world. But it is wrong to say that tears are the only just response to the world, or to say that the justness of tears makes action and caring and bravery and joy meaningless.

Dabney Stuart, in his very fine book *Don't Look Back*, writes in verse and nonverse, and deals with some deconstructive themes. The poems of-

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ten explore self, the brokenness and elusiveness of self, the attempts to discover and reconcile; they also explore other matters and use other methods. The book, then, is in part deconstructive. For one of his poems defines, with clarity and suggestiveness, a major philosophical cause of deconstructive verse; and another poem (more strictly a section of a poem) is, in vivid free verse, a beautiful example of the deconstructive lyric. Here is the first poem I'm talking about, "Plowing It Under."

How is the darkness dark,
or the light, light?
And how do we see by either
the hand
Raised, or held out? When we
give, do we uncage
Reasons for a new life,
or ride again
Instinct, that tired horse,
back to his stall?
Does
Everything tend by nature
toward the dumb fork
that says to us *One way*
or the other?

Hard questions, if you take
them seriously.
Only a fool ignores them,
or a clod.
Do we bring form to the world,
or does the world
Guide us through its maze?
How will you know
Even if you find the true color,
and your hand
Settles perfectly on its body,
which is which?

The poem is about the inescapability of the Kantian trap, whether Stuart has Kant specifically in mind or not. The mind constitutes experience, and therefore cannot possibly know whether it knows anything correctly, or knows anything to be true.

How is the darkness dark, or the light, light? That is, do we perceive, truly, darkness and light; or do we create by our perceptual apparatus darkness and light? We must choose which, yet have no way to tell which. Is our experience trustworthy or not? Does it grant us truth—any truth at all?

After several reformulations, which raise some other lively questions, the poem succinctly asks, "Do we bring form to the world, or does the world / Guide us through the maze?" The remainder of the poem even more elegantly poses the question.

The poem states a problem with great energy, clarity, and elegance, a central problem from which much of the modern skepticism derives. The poem about the question also begs the question, by the definiteness of its inconclusiveness. Is it really a tie? If we can know that the issue of skepticism and verity is a tie, or rationally believe that it is a tie, then there is knowledge and it is not a tie. At least the argument and anxieties cut deep, near the most basic structure and nature of our thinking.

The poem is nonverse, though it gives a strong impression of metricality. Thus we have a rational, clear, and eloquent poem—in nonverse—on a question crucial in the history of modernism and modern skepticism, a poem strongly suggesting that the skeptic is right: that there is no ground for decision. Is this, then, a deconstructive lyric? In theme and nonverse, yes; in form, ordonnance, rationality, and clarity of language, no.

Section 5 of "Casting" is highly successful short-line free verse.

If it's a dream
only a person from the dream
can wake me.
No
one else is there.
I
hold the monofilament
at the lure's eye
suspended. A light
breaks upon it
a fine shower of gold.
Dazzled
I
bend closer, my hand
misguiding, missing
such a simple act,
threading
the bait's eye.
I
continue to
fail
seemingly forever
bowed
toward the shimmering
brightness

blurred—so close,
now so many times
my mouth is
littered with hooks.

This section is, treated as a complete poem, a very good poem, one of the best deconstructive lyrics I know.

The uncertainty; the sense of being interlocked within a lock to which the key is also locked, therein or elsewhere; the vivid near-solipsism in presence of a world that dazzles rather than enlightens—all are deconstructive modes. But while the poem is about confusion and obscurity, it is itself strangely lucid.

The image, the extended allegorical image, is of fishing, and the seeker becomes the sought. You can roughly paraphrase the poem so: a fisherman fishes in a sea or lake brilliant with light and with light's excitement and confusion, and in the search to escape from the self-locked dream, from which you are awakened only by someone in the dream, which is a dream of solipsism almost or at least of dire separateness from what you—dream-you, colloquial-you, solipsistic you, reader and poet, if you are listening, you—would understand. What you try to understand flashes and vanishes and excites, and you find that hooks litter your mouth.

It is confusion, if various, but confusedly various, and thus, as a poetic subject, in an unconfused sense monotonously one. It is also a highly limited subject, the blind spot in the eye asserting wrongly that it is the essence of the eye, and it is a subject that fails the central poetic duty of just expression and understanding of human motivation. In this poem the "failure" is paradoxical, since the poem very well expresses and understands what it is like to be confused. Stuart has done such negation about as well as it is apt to be done by anyone since Hopkins.

Still, casting is not casting unless you actually intend to land a fish. Questioning is, by its nature and definition and history, not really questioning unless you are *really* and *truly* seeking answers. To do that requires care, thought, distinctions, hope, yes, and faith.

A bumper sticker asserts, with unquestioning fervor, "To Question Is the Answer."

I question that answer.

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Burned but Never Consumed

by Arthur Eckstein

The Burning Bush: Anti-Semitism and World History
by Barnet Litvinoff
New York: E.P. Dutton;
457 pp., $22.50

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The first writer known to have made the outrageous accusation of ritual cannibalism against the Jews was a pagan Greek named Apion. But it was the Christians who established prejudice against and hatred for Jews as a fixture of Western civilization. The Christians' animus against the Jews derived from the idea that "the Jews" had rejected and betrayed Jesus of Nazareth, engineering the Crucifixion. This was a charge originating in the embittered early relations between what were essentially two closely-intertwined religious communities (indeed, for at least a generation and perhaps a bit more the Christians were seen—and saw themselves—as merely one sect within Judaism; the definitive break only occurred after A.D. 70). Litvinoff in fact does not do as much as he could in discussing the complicated issues surrounding the Trial of Jesus. He might have pointed out that the Sanhedrin were hated collaborators with the Roman provincial administration (which could appoint—and dismiss—its membership); that Pontius Pilate was only the first of a very long line of tough Roman officials who saw the representatives of Christianity (rightly!) as troublemakers; and that even in the Gospel of John it is merely the High Priests and their flacks, not the Jewish populace as a whole, who are violently opposed to Jesus (see John 19:6). But Litvinoff does vividly point out the paradox of Christians consistently persecuting the ethnic group into which the Savior had been born: thus when the Rabbi Solomon Halevi was baptized in Spain in 1391 he adopted the name Pablo de Santa Maria because, as a member of the Levite clan, he claimed direct and literal descent from the family of the Holy Virgin.

Still, under the Christian governments of Europe down to the French Revolution, Jews were despised and penalized basically for what they did not believe, not for what they were. This meant that Jews could save themselves from persecution (which involved anything from extra taxation to mass expulsion to death via pogrom) by the simple act of converting publicly to Christianity. Many did precisely that. Meanwhile, certain popes sought to restrain the most virulent outbreaks of popular anti-Jewish hysteria. Hence Clement VI in 1348 dismissed as ludicrous the accusation that the Jews were spreading the Black Plague by poisoning Christian wells: he pointed out in a special decree that many Jews were dying of the Plague, while at the same time the Plague was spreading through countries uninhabited by Jews.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century went a long way toward defusing Christian hostility toward Jews on the basis of religion. (The same was true of Jewish hostility toward Christians: Litvinoff, ever balanced in his presentation, minces no words about this.) By the 1780's the government of Louis XVI was organizing a literary competition on the subject "How to Make the Jews Happier [!] and More Useful in France." In Germany in this same period the emblematic figure was the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (grandfather of the composer). As an associate of the poet Gotthold Lessing, the real founder of German humanism, Mendelssohn proved the power of Jewish intellect once released from the bonds of the Christian-imposed ghetto. Mendelssohn is one of Litvinoff's heroes, and understandably so.

The 19th century was even better. In Western Europe the Jews were emancipated from the social penalties they had endured for hundreds of years, and were allowed to enter the mainstream of society for the first time. The impact of their arrival—in every field from commerce to political science to art and literature—was enormous. Yet the 19th century also witnessed the rise of pseudoscientific racist nationalism, a threat to the Jews far more deadly than Christian persecution or distaste. Racist nationalism, like its contemporary, radical communism, was in fact a desperate attempt to recapture the primeval sense of community that was being pitilessly torn asunder in the 19th century by capitalism, the greatest engine of social change and individual freedom. And with both racist nationalism and radical communism, the fevered search for primeval unity (of "nation" or "class") led inevitably to the massacre of those designated as "outside the family."

Hence the 19th century—"the Century of Progress"—paved the way, for the Jews, to the Holocaust. Nor did assimilation help. For now the problem was not, as earlier, what the Jews did not believe, or what they wore, or the way they spoke: it was what the Jews ineradicably *were*, namely (in racist eyes) "an inferior breed of Asiatics . . . condemned from birth" who threatened to infect the "purity" of the various European communities. Litvinoff carefully (and rightly) distinguishes medieval Christian anti-Semitism from this new form, for from this new form there could be no escape; any Jew—a poet, a scientist, a war hero, a totally assimilated descendant of a convert to Christianity—remained a "virus" that had to be expunged.

Europe, both medieval and modern, thus turned out to be a nightmare for the Jews. Nor has the post-Holocaust return to the Middle East, the refounding of the Land of Israel, turned out to be more than a qualified success at best, according to Litvinoff. There, the initial political-military problem of threatened destruction and genocide at the hands of the Arabs has been, for the moment, surmounted. But it has been replaced by a hideously ironic moral problem: Jewish control, by right of conquest, over a huge non-Jewish population that remains fundamentally hostile. This has already led to calls from some quarters for the

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expulsion of that non-Jewish population, in the name of Jewish "purity."

In Litvinoff's view, in fact, there is only one region in the entire world where the Jews have actually been able to attain peace and almost total fulfillment: in America. Litvinoff rightly emphasizes that Jewish upward mobility and the ease of Jewish merging into the mainstream of American life was facilitated most by two facts not of the Jews but of the United States: first, the Constitution, which explicitly forbade official state discrimination on the basis of religion, and second, the fact that in America the Jews found a society that was already made up of a great variety of different groups, a polyglot society where the issue of "national purity," if not absent, was greatly defused (at least as far as the white population was concerned). The result of all these factors has been that the Jewish experience in America has been the happiest Jewish experience of any society on earth.

And yet . . . there has recently emerged a new paradox. It is only in America in the post-Holocaust period that anti-Semitism has developed from a base of true populist mythology—found in the black community. In 1988 we witnessed Louis Farrakhan being invited by black college students throughout the country to come to their campuses to deliver his anti-Jewish diatribes (including the charge that evil Jewish businessmen were behind the drug problem in the black community). And in 1988 we also witnessed the incredible spectacle of an assistant to the black mayor of Chicago publicly accusing Jewish doctors of injecting AIDS into black babies: a return to the paranoid fantasies of the 14th century. Blacks, who have long served as scapegoats in American society, seem to have found a scapegoat of their own. I suspect that the sad story so well told by Barnet Litvinoff is not quite finished.

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Bad Georgie

by Brendan Galvin

Understanding George Garrett
by R.H.W. Dillard
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press; 230 pp., $19.95 (cloth), $9.95 (paper)

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The facts of George Garrett's literary career are laid out in the bibliography here: his 24 books include novels, plays, and collections of poems and short stories. In addition he has served as editor of 17 other books—interviews with contemporary writers, literary criticism, books on film scripts. He has also written a biography of the novelist James Jones; a book-length critical study of the novelist Mary Lee Settle; screenplays; essays on William Faulkner, James Gould Cozzens, John Cheever, daily life in Elizabethan England, WASP humor, writers as teachers, and on and on. The amount and the range are breathtaking, and so is the quality. One is tempted to imagine Garrett—on his way to deliver one of his controversial lectures or an inspired reading from his work—seated in an airplane with a pen in each hand, writing on the two nearest folding trays.

Now comes R.H.W. Dillard, himself a novelist, poet, screenwriter, and critic of considerable accomplishment, to assess Garrett's *oeuvre* in *Understanding George Garrett*. This is the first of what will doubtless be many book-length studies of Garrett. That many lesser contemporaries have so far received far more attention than the author of *Death of the Fox* and *The Succession* is not surprising, given that Garrett has consistently ignored literary fashion and written what he wanted rather than what the pop audience craved. He chose early on to be, "If I could, like Mr. Faulkner, *The Cat Who Walks Alone*. . . ."

Mr. Dillard is the right person to explain and evaluate Garrett's prodigious achievement. He is familiar with the multiple versions of Garrett's fictional works and how they mirror each other structurally, thematically, and imagistically. He is also grounded in the Old and New Testaments and in Christian symbolism, which is crucial to any reading of Garrett. And his familiarity with the work of contemporary meta-fictionists renders him capable of untangling the intricate structures Garrett frequently employs to involve the reader, especially in such novels as *The Succession* and *Poison Pen*, where one is not permitted to be a passive listener, but must help create reality and meaning.

Mr. Dillard begins with an overview of Garrett's career to date, noting along the way that in "all of his work he has maintained a commitment to the creation and rendering of people and their problems as 'different' and individuated, as humanly and spiritually rather than sociologically or politically relevant." There next follows an analysis of Garrett's first novel, *The Finished Man*, whose backdrop is Southern politics, and which details the moral struggles of characters representing old values and new, always in the fallen world that Garrett insists we live in.

Chapter three discusses the second novel, *Which Ones Are the Enemy?*, and relates the plot and characters to earlier stories Garrett wrote about military service in postwar Europe. The setting is the Free Territory of Trieste in the early 1950's, and the protagonist John Riche, a professional soldier who by choice inhabits a spiritual wasteland in which he tries to remain uninvolved with other people. Through his relationship with Angela, a B-girl whose life has been ravaged by the war, Riche learns to break out of the cell of himself, only to lose Angela to suicide. In the end he has learned to empathize with others and to articulate his own experience as a step toward his redemption.

Do, Lord, Remember Me, Garrett's next novel, has had a curious publishing history, and according to Dillard deserves to be reprinted in its entirety, not in the way it was originally brought out. Under the pressures of publishing economics, fully three-fourths of the manuscript was cut, reducing the novel from a Chaucerian panorama of small-town Southern life to a neater tale about Big Red Smalley, a traveling evangelist, and his followers. One hopes that the publisher who reprints it (or, really, publishes it for the first time) will also collect Garrett's miscellaneous essays, which would make provocative reading.

From Southern politics to army life

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to tent-show revivalism in three novels: it is not hard to see that Garrett was breaking new ground for himself with each book, moving from locale to locale, situation to situation. Along the way he was also finding new forms for his fiction, and Dillard is at his best when he explains what happened during the writing of Garrett's major works to date, the novels *Death of the Fox* and *The Succession*, the first an imaginatively reconstructed life of Sir Walter Raleigh, the second a book with no central character, but so rich with fleshed-out characters and authenticities of Elizabethan and Jacobean life that the reader never notices there is no main figure.

Dillard sees in the two books more than the run of historical novels. Together they offer, he says,

> a fiction of artistic subtlety and intelligence rather than derring-do, of living fact rather than antiquarian gesture, of imaginative meditation on history rather than the recounting of invented events against a backdrop of history. Garrett builds up a historical context of great richness and factual accuracy—an Elizabethan and Jacobean world which is fully researched and vividly rendered—but he abandons conventional plot along with almost all of the other conventions of the genre in a successful effort to create new narrative forms, "open texts" which engage readers in the very act of historical imagination . . .

Poison Pen, which gets the next chapter in *Understanding George Garrett*, is a controversial novel composed of crank letters to celebrities (Lyndon Johnson, Christie Brinkley, Ted Kennedy, Brooke Shields, etc.), lists of hilarious literary judgments (e.g., "Dave Smith is the Robert Penn Dickey of American Poetry"), authorial denials, entrances and exits by one John Towne, a seedy academic who at times seems to have written *Poison Pen* itself—in short a hellzapoppin' Olson and Johnny romp. Mr. Dillard deserves some new literary award for being able to untangle the structure of this one.

When misread, as by the reviewer who saw it as a monsterly creation of "Bad Georgie," *Poison Pen*'s satirical intent can be misconstrued, for it truly is the many-layered kazoo concerto another reader judged it to be, aimed at our time, when celebrities tout their projected, media-fabricated personalities as the only truth. (Garrett quotes his wife as saying at one point, "Public life is an illusion. Only private life is real and matters.") And that is the point to the celebrity-puncturing that occurs in *Poison Pen*.

Wherever he can, Mr. Dillard has thematically related Garrett's poems and short stories to the novels. What we now also need is a new, true version of *Do, Lord, Remember Me*, a collection of Garrett's feisty essays, and somewhere down the line someone must tell the story of Garrett's role as Father Confessor and Godfather to a younger generation of American writers, for no other contemporary teacher and writer has as many books dedicated in gratitude to him. R.H.W. Dillard has made a fine beginning with *Understanding George Garrett*, and the last word here should be his.

> [Garrett] has maintained his serious dedication to writing of poetry and short fiction, even while his reputation was developing as an important novelist. He has taken chances as an essayist and critic by daring to point a revealing finger at the emperor's new clothes, no matter what powerful literary figure was wearing them at the time. He has written a body of seriously Christian art at a time when Christian belief is too often worn on literary sleeves rather than in writers' hearts. Recognizing both that people must learn "to lie a little and live together" in this world of lies and that the complex lie of art may be the surest way of speaking the truth in such a world, Garrett has truly gone his own way, and those who have benefited most are his readers, for he has shared with them an intensive and vital imaginative experience.

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A More Perfect Union

by William A. Donohue

In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government
by Charles Murray
New York: Simon and Schuster; 341 pp., $19.95

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In Pursuit is a philosophical exegesis on what is wrong with contemporary social policy analysis. In some ways it is a sequel to Murray's *Losing Ground*, having much in common with Part IV (Rethinking Social Policy) of that influential book. Though this is a more enterprising work, it is also a less successful one, leaving the reader with a sense that Murray's real goal is to provide a somewhat novel argument for a libertarian conception of the common good.

Murray concludes *In Pursuit* by stating that "much of what central government must do first of all is to leave people alone, and then make sure that they are left alone by others—that people are restrained from the use of force against each other." What else should government do? That's about it. It is no wonder that three pages later Murray approvingly cites the libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick. But whereas Nozick was content to argue against big government on the principle of individual liberty, Murray seeks to up the ante by arguing that the pursuit of happiness is best fulfilled by having the government do next to nothing. Now it is one thing to show why government programs usually fail, quite another to maintain that the minimal state is man's best hope for attaining human happiness.

"The purpose of government," Murray says, "is to facilitate the pursuit of happiness of its citizens." Here he is at one with the Founding Fathers, making the case that government exists to enable men and women to use their resources in a way that liberates and promotes happiness. Borrowing from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Murray makes the case that material resources, safety, self-respect, and enjoyment are central to the pursuit of happiness, and that limited government best facilitates that process in the long run.

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As for Maslow's other need—"belongingness"—Murray maintains that this is best achieved through the other enabling conditions. He quite rightly insists that the "little platoons" of work, family, and community (church should have been added) form "the nexus within which the pursuit of happiness is worked out."

Murray wants to challenge the conventional thinking in social policy analysis, and he is most persuasive when he takes the public policy community head-on, demonstrating how unexamined suppositions regarding the nature of man act to undermine program effectiveness. Rarely, as Murray points out, do the makers of public policy even bother to question what problem they are supposed to be solving. Do they know how to measure success? If poverty programs reduce the present incidence of material hardship, but at the same time increase the future likelihood of welfare dependency, to what extent can they be scored a success? These are the kinds of questions that need to be raised by the human services industry.

If there are three prescriptives that Murray offers for better program development, they are that a) social policy should be framed from the perspective of the individual, b) social policy needs to be sensitive to the interconnectedness of the constituent properties of human happiness, and c) social policy should set limits, recognizing the need for a stopping point.

To put it another way, a social policy that neglects the role of how self-interested individuals will respond to government programs is bound to fail. Much the same can be said of programs that are instituted without their creators having thought through the cause and effect relationship that exists between the attainment of one good (e.g., the acquisition of material rewards) and the attainment of another (self-respect). A social policy that puts no limits on its ambitions will necessarily inhibit the pursuit of happiness.

If Murray were satisfied to contribute these kernels of wisdom, his book would be nothing but a sequel to *Losing Ground*. But his reach is much higher, extending to a contentious portrait of the individual, society, and the state.

For Murray, human beings "acting in a private capacity *if restrained from the use of force* have a remarkably good history." To those who say what of slumlords, racists, and other assorted rip-off artists, Murray replies that none would stay in business for very long without the connivance of the state. Indeed he argues that unless impeded by the state, people will a) tropistically create the conditions under which material resources will be satisfactorily attained, b) establish norms of safety, c) develop norms of self-respect, and d) create intrinsically rewarding activities. In short, the pursuit of happiness is contingent on the near absence of the state.

But as Murray knows, it is precisely because private persons *do* use force, and have indeed done so throughout all of history, that government is necessary. And why doesn't Murray inform us of the details of the "remarkably good history" that men and women have established when the use of force has been held at bay? Are the cardinal sins of greed, envy, lust, and so on, always predicated on the use of force? Is there any society, culled from all the anthropological literature, that Murray can point to as instructive?

Part of the problem with Murray's portrait is his unwillingness to grapple with history. He prefers to engage us in endless "thought experiments," most of which, he readily concedes, have little to do with the real world. So he works out analytically, to his satisfaction, what he cannot demonstrate with ethnographic research.

What is one to make of a social critic who thinks it "odd" that social problems even exist? Who says that it is "*damned odd*" and "unnatural" that the schools are a mess? Murray seems to think that because having good schools and good teachers is in everyone's interest, it is a function of statist distortions that the crisis in education exists. Moreover, his "thought experiments" allow no role for racism, sexism, NEA's, or ACLU's, but in the real world of prejudice, interest groups, and ideology, social policymakers must deal with the cards they've been dealt. And this much must be said: the ultimate dealer is not government, but inherently flawed men and women. It is private persons, after all, who create public institutions.

If the source of all evil for Marxists is capitalism, for libertarians it is the state. Those who believe in original sin will not be impressed by either explanation. And that is why they will find this volume wanting, despite its insights into the failures of contemporary social policy analysis.

William A. Donohue is the author of The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union, *and an associate professor of sociology at La Roche College in Pittsburgh.*

Reading, Writing, 'Rithmetic and War

by Michael W. Albin

Palestinian Universities Under Occupation
by Antony T. Sullivan
Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press; 133 pp.

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Twenty-five years ago when I was a schoolteacher in an Afghan mountain valley I came across a book by an English pedagogue called *Teaching English Under Difficult Circumstances*. I was reminded of that title as I read this informative monograph by Middle East commentator Antony Sullivan. His short book might have been subtitled, "Teaching the Liberal Arts Under Next to Impossible Circumstances." Can you imagine higher education conducted in less hospitable conditions than in Gaza and the West Bank during the past ten years? Students and professors are under unendurable strain to perform such mundane tasks as attending class, writing term papers, and sitting for exams in the face of political provocation from the PLO and its kin, while trying simultaneously to keep Israeli occupation authorities at bay. The fact that higher education has survived at all is a cause for wonderment. Another surprise is that three of the four Palestinian colleges are patterned on American models. They provide a four-year program of study based on the grade point system. The classroom, rather than the tutorial session, is the focus of teaching. Independent study and use of the library, as well as concentrated exposure to the classics of Western and Arabic litera-

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ture, are central to the curriculum.

However much Arabs and Palestinians in particular view the United States as Israel's sugar daddy, it is still true that the American way of undergraduate education commands admiration. The historical record is a distinguished one, including the American University of Beirut, the American University in Cairo, and the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to name only three. In today's Palestinian lands this American tradition finds its most successful exemplar in Birzeit University, located not far from Jerusalem. The first graduating class left the school in 1976. By the academic year 1987-88, the college, with 190 faculty members in the humanities and physical sciences, offered the best education available to Palestinians living in the occupied territories. In the cultural studies program students are expected to read Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Vergil, Aquinas, Averroës, Avicenna, Hegel, Marx, and Freud. Contemporary Mideastern authors include nationalist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and the Egyptian reformer Muhammed Abduh. Politics intrudes on this idyll in the form of student factions demanding that the university adopt a more overtly nationalist character. Sullivan, who confesses to a traditionalist view of liberal education, cautions that Birzeit, as well as the other Palestinian colleges, "must remain on the alert to safeguard its integrity against . . . internal challenges."

But Sullivan admits that politics cannot be banished from campus. Palestinians can consider themselves fortunate that they have four private universities among which to choose. I can think of no other Arab country where freedom on this scale is available to students. With due respect to some notable exceptions, the state-run universities of the Arab countries provide mass education of the least-common-denominator variety. But the four universities in Palestine — Birzeit, Bethlehem, al-Najah in Nablus, and Gaza Islamic University — are viewed by Israeli administrators as laboratories for political agitation. In a study published earlier this year, Abraham Ashkenasi observed that campus elections show overwhelming student sympathy for the PLO and, at Bethlehem University, for far more radical groups. Benjamin Netanyahu has gone so far as to conclude of the universities that the PLO has attempted to "turn them into centers of incitement, extremism and terror." The authorities can always find justification for banning books from libraries and classrooms or for sending students home for weeks at a time. Palestinian intellectuals in the territories and abroad dispute this assessment; they focus on the high quality of instruction and academic freedom, as well as the need to educate young Palestinians, who since 1967 have not been eligible to come and go as they please across international borders.

Sullivan says that it is natural that Palestinians look to university students as leaders in resisting Jewish encroachments on Arab land and in opposing abusive treatment of Arabs in Israeli jails. As the uprising passes its first anniversary, it is impossible to be optimistic about the chances of survival of the academic enterprise in Palestine. At the very least it will continue to lurch between the Scylla of nationalist agitation and the Charybdis of Israeli repression. Why shouldn't the Israelis take this occasion to close the schools, which they claim have little academic purpose? My prediction is that they will, and that Palestinian students will be obliged once more to go into exile for higher education.

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Blood Relations

by S.L. Varnado

Bitter Blood: A True Story of Southern Pride, Madness and Multiple Murder
by Jerry Bledsoe
New York: E.P. Dutton; 468 pp., $19.95

◆

In 1840, when Edgar Allan Poe wrote the first modern detective story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," an unsuspecting public scarcely realized it was witnessing the birth of a new genre that would actually become the most ecumenical of all literary forms.

Since Poe's time, the detective story has flourished among readers of every creed, class, and nationality. There are clerical detectives (Father Brown and Rabbi David Small); aristocratic detectives (Lord Peter Wimsey); sleazy detectives (Sam Spade); French, Spanish, and Indian detectives (Inspectors Maigret, Alvarez, and Ghote); septuagenarian detectives (Miss Marple); and even a blind detective (Max Carrados).

Indeed, the profession has become so overcrowded in recent years that Truman Capote hit upon the idea of widening the field by transforming the fictional crime story into the factual crime story. The result was his amazingly successful *In Cold Blood*, which spawned a host of imitators. Today, the "true crime story" is as popular as its fictional counterpart.

Jerry Bledsoe's *Bitter Blood* is one of the latest entries in this new form. Bledsoe, a reporter for the *Goldsboro News & Record* in North Carolina, bases his tale of murder and mayhem on a group of award-winning news stories that he wrote in 1985. The book recounts a series of multiple murders occurring in 1984-85 among three prominent and wealthy families in Kentucky and North Carolina. Ultimately, nine people lost their lives in this Grand Guignol. In an afterword to the book, Bledsoe informs the reader that he wrote the story in an attempt to understand why the tragedies happened. This is an ambitious goal, and it gives Bledsoe's work an integrity and seriousness it might otherwise have lacked.

Bledsoe's scenario is a complex one. On a quiet Sunday morning in July 1984, Dolores Lynch, a wealthy sixty-eight-year-old widow, and her daughter Janie were found in their suburban home outside Louisville, Kentucky, brutally gunned down by an unknown assailant. Since nothing in the house had been touched, police were baffled by a lack of motive for the crime. The following year, three members of the socially prominent Newsom family of North Carolina were found murdered in the living room of their large and elegant home in Winston-Salem. Again, no motive for the brutal slayings was apparent.

At first, the two crimes seemed unrelated, but as police dug deeper they began to wonder if a link might exist between them. The investigation eventually focused on Susie Sharp

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Lynch, a former beauty queen at Wake Forest University and the niece of North Carolina's first woman Supreme Court justice. Although Susie seemed an unlikely suspect in murders involving her own parents as well as members of the Lynch family, there were some puzzling circumstances. From childhood Susie had been an impetuous and high-strung girl, prone to sudden outbursts of rage. At the age of 24, while working on a graduate degree at Wake Forest, she had met and married Tom Lynch, son of the first victim. The marriage broke up a few years later, and at the time of the murders Susie was engaged in a bitter legal battle with Tom over the custody of their two young sons. Susie was also known to have become increasingly bitter toward her mother and father, Robert and Florence Newsom, because of their refusal to side with her in the custody fight. These were rather thin motives, but the police were interested.

As they pried deeper into the case, they learned that Susie had formed a strange and unhealthy relationship with Fritz Klenner, her first cousin. Like Susie, Klenner was related to both the Newsom and Sharp families. The son of a nationally famous physician, Klenner was described by acquaintances as a neurotic and unstable young man who nursed secret grudges and odd anxieties. A medical school dropout, a health freak, a gun collector, and a self-described "survivalist," he labored under a thwarted ambition of living up to the expectations of his prestigious father. Fritz and Susie were apparently drawn to one another by their mutual frustrations. When Susie moved in with him, bringing her sons along, the stage was set for a version of Euripides' *Medea* in modern dress.

As more and more clues fell into place, it became evident that Susie and Fritz had planned and executed the family murders out of a twisted desire for revenge on Susie's husband as well as the Newsom family. The police collected the necessary evidence and moved quickly to make an arrest—but not quickly enough. The final episode of this 20th-century *Götterdämerrung*, in which Susie and Fritz destroyed themselves after first executing Susie's sons, adds a grisly twist to a tale of pride, hatred, and pointless revenge.

Like many examples of the true crime story, *Bitter Blood* is told naively and without literary embellishment. The artistry, atmosphere, and nuances of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* are missing. Bledsoe's journalistic preoccupation with "just the facts, ma'am" leads him into needless complexities, and the reader often must wade through an unassimilated mass of names, dates, family connections, and biographical sketches, many of which have little relation to the central narrative. As a consequence, the book sometimes reads like a police report. Paradoxically, however, this gives it a sense of immediacy and verisimilitude that a more artistic finish might have lessened.

The thesis arising indirectly from *Bitter Blood* contradicts a number of theories dear to modern sociology and psychology. By implication Bledsoe seems to argue that evil is not necessarily the result of environmental factors: that it is more like an ingrained flaw in human nature. Susie Sharp Lynch and Fritz Klenner had the advantages of money, education, and social position. Both were from upper-class Southern families, and both were raised in an atmosphere of what used to be called "good breeding." Yet in spite of this, they seemed bent on wrecking their lives and the lives of others.

What went wrong? Bledsoe sifts through the paraphernalia of abnormal psychology—"classical mental disorders," "father hatred," "paranoia"—but appears to rest his case on pure metaphysics. He closes the book with a statement by Susie's brother Rob Newsom: "My sister despised the parable of the prodigal son. She thought it was unjust, unfair, and she didn't believe Jesus said it . . . in my sister's mind, you always had to be right because the consequences of being wrong were awesome . . . I don't know anything to call that but a sort of spiritual sickness." This is a great deal like the classical definition of pride, and while such terminology may not appeal to the modern psychologist, it would perhaps have appealed to Dostoyevsky, Sophocles, or St. Augustine. Stories such as this remind us that social and family relationships are often a thin veneer covering the mysterious area of human nature that Joseph Conrad called "heart of darkness," Herman Melville termed "the mystery of iniquity," and Christians refer to as "original sin."

All of which returns us to the mystery of the mystery story. Why do we "enjoy" these horrendous tales of blood, jealousy, spite, and violence? Do they appeal to some unhealthy instinct in us? Do they encourage the mayhem they describe? Recently, a number of high-minded reformers have taken this view, and I must admit that in certain instances they may be right. But in the long run, humanity has given a different answer. Although Poe invented the modern version of the crime story, its antecedents extend back to the Bible, Greek tragedy, Renaissance drama, and the Gothic novel. The general public, as G.K. Chesterton pointed out, is going to have its murder stories, whether in the form of penny dreadfuls or in the work of Conrad, Dostoyevsky, and Faulkner. Perhaps the prophet Jeremiah summed up the ultimate appeal of such tales: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

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A Way Out

by Peter J. Leithart

After Apartheid: The Solution for South Africa
by Frances Kendall and Leon Louw
San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies;
253 pp., $17.95

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Discussions of the future of apartheid generally assume that South Africa must remain a homogenous "unitary state." This assumption not only presents a paralyzing dilemma (either democracy or apartheid), but also a prescription for continued social turmoil, if not outright civil war. A unitary state is a "winner take all" state—if there are indeed only two alternatives, then there is simply no hope for a just *and* stable settlement. Almost no one defends the injustices of apartheid; on the other hand, as if any additional

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evidence were needed, the degeneration of the Philippines should be sufficient argument against crusading democracy.

In *After Apartheid*, libertarian authors Kendall and Louw dispense with the "unitary state" presumption. In place of "one man, one vote" they suggest a system that would enable citizens to express their political will at several different levels: in short, "one man, many votes." On the economic front, the authors advocate deregulation, removal of prohibitive standards requirements, and a general "devolution" of decision-making to the private sector. Finally, they insist that all apartheid laws must be repealed immediately.

After sketching the history of apartheid, as well as outlining South Africa's current political and economic landscape, Kendall and Louw propose a canton system of decentralized and depoliticized administration, following a Swiss model. Under this system, the federal government would be strictly limited and constitutionally defined, leaving education, transportation, judiciary, regulation, etc. at commune level—with the cantons. Each canton would have its own legislative body, and perhaps even its own constitution. The residents of each canton would determine their own social and legal arrangements; everything from communism to pure free enterprise to racial domination would be permitted within the cantons, but none would be federally imposed. Freedom of movement would be guaranteed by the constitution and enforced by the federal government, so that no one would be made to live under an offensive system.

This is a remarkably fresh and hopeful book because it not only explodes the widespread mythology about South Africa (e.g., that apartheid is an aberration of capitalism), but also proposes a solution that has a genuine chance of success. One indication of the potential of the canton proposal may be gleaned from the book's dust jacket, which carries endorsements from South African leaders including Winnie Mandela, Zulu Chief Buthelezi, and the late Alan Paton.

The authors' analysis, however, is flawed in several respects. While admitting the reality of the Marxist threat and of Communist influence in several of the black political parties, Kendall and Louw tend to underestimate the role of Communism in, for example, the ANC. Since the authors are proposing a solution for the internal strife of South Africa, and not looking at the situation in geopolitical terms, this oversight, though significant, is not fatal.

Also, except for a few passing references, the authors ignore the role of the Christian Church in South African politics and society. In a nation as Christian as South Africa, religious institutions must play a central role in any effort to dismantle apartheid. Unless there are profound changes in Christian attitudes on race issues (and these changes have been taking place), any political or economic reform, no matter how sensible in itself, is just so much tinkering with the machinery. On the other hand, if the churches can provide moral and theological moorings for the canton proposal (as they have in the past for apartheid), and if they can avoid the perilous extremes of intransigent traditionalism and revolutionary liberationism, there may yet be hope for this troubled nation.

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REVISIONS

THE NATIVE AMERICAN

In the business of literature, which has since the 30's been dominated by more recent immigrants, Gore Vidal, old-line WASP, has emerged as the champion of a distinctly American civilization, or what he thinks is left of it. The mantle assumed by Emerson and Lowell and William Dean Howells has fallen on Vidal's rather unlikely shoulders. In *At Home: Essays 1982-1988* (Random House, 303 pp., $18.95), the tireless Vidal has collected six years' worth of pieces from *The New York Review of Books*, the TLS, *The Nation*, and even *Architectural Digest*. Most of them do indeed have a longer shelf-life than, say, *The Nation*'s newsprint, and are well worth reading or re-reading. Here are pieces on some of his standard heroes (Tennessee Williams and, with all irony, Richard Nixon; I should say antiheroes), and standard villains (Mr. and Mrs. Reagan: Laurence Leamer's book *Make Believe* sets him off). He is still mocking the millennialists in one breath while harping with another on the end of the world he fears he will see. He is still obsessed with America, bemoaning the crumbling empire it has become. He is still taken with American writers, and among the best pieces in the book are appreciations and some criticism of Henry James, Howells (whom Vidal is quite right to complain is ignored), and Frederic Prokosch. Vidal can still write, too, and very well.

Vidal can afford the luxury of criticizing his own business with the authority of an insider. In a very funny passage in his piece on Howells, he tries to imagine the route a literarily-ambitious Howells would take today. "Today, if the son of an Ohio newspaper editor would like to be a novelist, he would not quit school at fifteen to become a printer, and then learn six languages and do his best to read all the great literary figures of the present as well as of the past. . . . Rather, he would graduate from high school; go on to a university and take a creative writing course; get an M.A. for having submitted a novel (about the son of an Ohio editor who grew up in a small town *and found out about sex* and wants to be a writer and so goes to a university where he submits etc.)"

Vidal's complaint about modern American literature is that "what tends to be left out of these works is the world. World gone, no voluntary readers. No voluntary readers, no literature—only creative writing courses and English studies, activities marginal (to put it tactfully) to civilization."

There is, of course, threading through these essays, the usual hatred of Christianity (and Judaism, and Islam), and the frequent defense, oblique and direct, of inversion. There is also a certain preoccupation with autobiography and self-defense—but then he has led an interesting life, and kicks, generally, those who have kicked first. And to his credit his first concern, whether he is tactful about it or not, is always civilization, especially the odd civilization of the American Republic. (KD)

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Letter From Washington

by Samuel Francis

Tabula Rasa

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If George Bush accomplishes nothing else in his lifetime, he has at least earned a secure niche in future editions of Trivial Pursuit. Not since Martin Van Buren trounced the Whigs in 1836 has an incumbent Vice President been elected to the White House. The lackluster record of Andrew Jackson's successor perhaps does not inspire optimism about the new administration, but, as most Americans who bothered to vote probably realized, it will beat the socks off what Michael Dukakis would have offered.

Among those voters who cast their ballots for Mr. Bush were most American conservatives, who had never previously supported him but who finally signed on with enthusiasm. Having wasted their ammunition in combat for Jack Kemp, Pat Robertson, Robert Dole, and Pierre DuPont, conservatives now came to imagine that Mr. Bush's fusillades against Mr. Dukakis represented their own victory, and they gladly galloped off with him to pump their last rounds into the Democratic corpse.

But despite the Bush victory, the fact is that American conservatism is beginning to resemble downtown Beirut in its political and philosophical disintegration. Mr. Bush himself is nothing if not an incarnation of the large yacht club that has spawned Lodges and Rockefellers, and for all the bravado at "morning in America" and "we're ready to lead," the Taft-Goldwater-Reagan wing of the GOP, along with the Old Right, the New Right, the neoconservatives, the First, Second, and Third Generations, the libertarians, the evangelicals, the Southern, Catholic, and Neo-Medieval Rights, and the many-splintered school of Leo Strauss, all were dispatched to the showers.

No doubt most of these grouplets will survive in the recesses of their own political, philosophical, and tax-exempt caverns, and the nether portions of the federal government may provide a source of relatively honest income for many. But none has much prospect of setting the pace of the Bush administration. Mr. Bush's main campaign advisers and Cabinet officials are not known to be the sort of men who will snooze their afternoons away while the guardians of the damp brow and the pure heart march off with the government.

The political decline of the American right is matched—perhaps even caused—by its philosophical decomposition, and no text better illustrates the disintegration of the conservative mind in the last few years than Professor Charles R. Kesler's introduction to a recent anthology of conservative essays. *Keeping the Tablets: Modern American Conservative Thought*, edited by Mr. Kesler and William F. Buckley Jr., is a revised version of a collection originally published by Mr. Buckley in 1970. As the new title suggests, the current edition purports to pronounce an orthodoxy to which the American rights should adhere.

But the tablets Mr. Kesler offers are etched in a strange tongue. While his anthology retains selections from such major conservative minds of the present and recent past as Russell Kirk, James Burnham, and Willmoore Kendall, Mr. Kesler seems to regard most of these as rather like museum pieces, exhibited mainly for their quaintness. He makes it his business to redefine American conservatism in such a way as to exclude from it what once were considered its representative voices.

It is Mr. Kesler's contention that the Declaration of Independence, or rather five words from it, is the "central idea," as Abraham Lincoln called it, of our political tradition. The success of liberalism, Mr. Kesler thinks, is due to the liberals' misappropriation of this idea, with the result that "it has become easy for modern liberals to seize the moral high ground on virtually any issue." Conservatives may gain power if, like the left, they "know the magic words needed to unlock our highest traditions." His counsel, then, is to resist the left not by rejecting its incantations to equality but by sealing them, and by relegating to the back shelves those formulations of conservatism that do not center on equality or which interpret the Declaration and the American tradition differently.

"The American republic," writes Mr. Kesler,

> claims to be based on self-evident truths, first among them that "all men are created equal." Properly understood —meaning an equality of rights, not of virtue, wisdom, or talents, an equality reflecting man's humanity, i.e., his place in nature and the universe— this *is* self-evidently true. But it has not fared well with the majority of conservative thinkers over the past few decades.

Yet Mr. Kesler nowhere explains why the Declaration should be taken as the defining document of the American tradition, let alone why the "created equal" formula should define the Declaration itself. Had he found space in his 450-page collection for M.E. Bradford's essay "The Heresy of Equality," he would have afforded his readers an opportunity to learn how the Declaration may be read in other ways. (He and Mr. Buckley included two essays by Harry Jaffa, Mr. Kesler's mentor, but could find no room for Mr. Bradford's article, itself a reply to one of those by Mr. Jaffa.)

Nor does Mr. Kesler explain in what way it is "self-evident" that all men are created equal. Were it so, why does anyone deny it, and why are there not only conflicting conservative understandings of what the slogan means but also different liberal and socialist interpretations? If the phrase means "equality of rights," what are these rights? Is that the same as "equality of opportunity," and is it possible to have real equality of rights or of opportunity unless there is first equality of condition? Does not a serious commitment to "equality of rights" as the ideal around which political, legal, social, and economic institutions are to be built drag us ineluctably toward a leveled

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wasteland over which a leviathan state presides for the enforcement of equality and in which a political and economic regimen centered on and driven by envy and by what President Washington called the "spirit of innovation" prevails?

"Russell Kirk, Friedrich Hayek, and Irving Kristol," Mr. Kesler writes, "would agree that a healthy nation cannot really be dedicated to any proposition or abstract truth, because a nation is a kind of spontaneous social order emerging from historical experience and the unguided evolution of market and cultural forces." In Mr. Kesler's view this kind of traditionalism, which avoids universalist assertions, accounts for the conservative failure "to bring about a genuine political realignment." "The difficulty is that conservatism seems to have no clear commitment to those principles or, more precisely, that it does not seem to understand why they are so important. It has not yet learned the vernacular of American politics, despite its great and numerous successes."

For all his critique of conventional conservative traditionalism, however, Mr. Kesler nowhere offers a defense of the truth of the philosophical abstraction he espouses. His defense of equality as the center of the American order is merely that it is our tradition, "our ancient faith," as Lincoln put it, and that this line of defense does not differ in form from the arguments of other, conventional conservative traditionalists such as Messrs. Kirk, Bradford, or Kendall—except that they make a historically more literate case for their very different reading of what the American tradition is.

One suspects that Mr. Kesler offers no philosophical defense for his idea of equality because there is no such defense. John Locke (and Thomas Jefferson, insofar as he was Locke's disciple) presumed an anthropology of the "state of nature" and a "social contract" that never existed. The natural equality of rights by which Mr. Kesler wants to define America as a political order is entirely derivative from Lockean fiction. It cannot stand in the absence of this fiction, nor can Locke's view of government and society as artificial products of the universal consent of their members. Pace Mr. Kesler, the US Constitution was not "made" at Philadelphia in four months, but in the long and complex evolution of European, British, colonial, and post-colonial history. At no time in the 18th century were Americans in a "state of nature," and the state and federal constitutions they drafted were in no way Lockean social contracts.

Whatever facile charms Mr. Kesler's egalitarianism may possess, it has managed to miss the point of the teaching that traditionalists have long asserted. That point is to defend an inherited way of life that cannot be reduced to easy formulas and neat slogans, and which philosophical texts and legalistic charters by themselves cannot adequately articulate. When conservative leaders have understood, and based their campaigns and policies upon, this unique, concrete, specific, and habitual ethos, which, as Kendall perceived, Americans understand "in their hips," they have prospered. When, like Mr. Jaffa's other disciple, Rep. Jack Kemp, they have followed Mr. Kesler's counsel, they have failed miserably.

Political success, of course, is of less importance to those who keep the real American tablets than the task of preserving the tablets themselves. As long as they are intact, we will be able to distinguish them from counterfeits such as Mr. Kesler offers, and there will be some firm ground from which their keepers may challenge, rather than merely mimic, those who try to erase them.

Samuel Francis is deputy editorial page editor of The Washington Times.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Under the (Smoking) Gun

◆

In *The Wall Street Journal* on June 16 last, Mr. Alexander Cockburn—whose regular presence in the premier organ of capitalist opinion, by the way, nicely illustrates Lenin's maxim about rope—argued that the current antismoking hysteria is a capitalist plot. The loathsome Cockburn adduced an article in an obscure publication of the Spartacist League that maintained that antismoking campaigns are intended to control workers more closely, to increase productivity without increasing wages, and to reduce corporate ventilation costs. Cockburn also observed that an early, and rabid, antismoker was Adolf Hitler.

All of this was delivered deadpan, and it is no more ludicrous or farfetched than Cockburn's other opinions, so he may even believe it. But he was purveying disinformation (maybe not for the first time): it is well-known in these parts that antismokers are serving the international Communist conspiracy.

I offer in evidence the copies of *Pravda* that Philip Morris recently sent to several hundred newspaper editors and the like, with a note observing that "*Pravda* does not carry cigarette advertising, or indeed any advertising." That may seem a little silly, but get a load of the pinko response: according to *The New York Times*, Democrat Congressman Mike Synar accused Philip Morris of "red-baiting" and called the mailing an "embarrassing throwback to the dark days of McCarthyism."

Synar ought to look at *Tobacco Culture*, a recent book by historian Tim Breen that attributes American independence to the irritation of Virginia tobacco growers at being jerked around by English merchants. No smoking, no US—get it, Synar?

Their attitude was a lot like my buddy Eugene's. When Northwest Airlines announced a smoking ban on all of its flights, Eugene announced that he was going to boycott the company. Since Northwest doesn't go anywhere Eugene wants to go, I recognized this as a statement of principle. Besides, Eugene doesn't smoke. When I asked him why a nonsmoker would object to a no-smoking policy, he said: "I might decide to start." Don't tread on Eugene. He doesn't like being told he can't do things.

Given tobacco's association with the cause of freedom, I don't think the present climate of epidemical fanaticism (Burke's phrase) augurs well for the Republic. So I'm on the smokers' side.

Besides, I like smokers. Pipesmokers, especially, tend to be pleasant folks. My favorite example of a self-evident truth is Mike Royko's observation that no one was ever mugged by a

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pipe-smoker. Child molesting, maybe, but not mugging. Some time ago the *Lutheran Standard* ran a photograph of a man with a pipe, and some churlish Mrs. Grundy wrote to complain. Another reader, a pipe-man, wrote wistfully about "the little song that Johann Sebastian Bach wrote for Anna Magdalene, *Erbauliche Gedanken eines Tobackrauchers*," with its happy reflection on the spiritual meaning of pipe smoking—"the smoke that rises like incense, the fire that reminds one of hell, and so forth." He translated the refrain thus: "And so on land, on sea, at home, abroad, / I'll smoke my pipe and worship God." Lutherans, he wrote, should resist "the further Methodistization of what was once the church of the Bible, Bach, and beer." Amen to that, says this disaffected Anglican.

I like the company of smokers, even of cigarette smokers. I like to be with them when they're smoking, because passive smoking is the only kind I allow myself these days, and when they're not, because they tend to be good folks. Didn't you ever notice that people in the smoking sections of airplanes were having more *fun* than the folks up front? Laughing and joking and talking with one another? Getting acquainted, not just staring glumly at their newspapers and avoiding eye contact? Smokers are sociable folks. That's why most of them started smoking in the first place. I wish airlines would set aside special sections for smokers, even if they won't let people smoke. I'd ride there.

Yes, I like smokers for their good nature. I also like their humility. Smokers are acquainted with human weakness and frailty. They know that people are a pretty sorry lot. They don't have great hopes of changing human nature. Few are into social reform in a big way. Hell, they can't even quit smoking.

Many smokers would agree with Robert Rosner of the (antismoking) Smoking Policy Institute who said this to *The Wall Street Journal*: "Smoking—the very fact of a cigarette dangling from one's mouth—is viewed as a breakdown in someone's self-discipline." But they would go on to ask whether self-discipline is the highest of virtues. Higher than charity? Compassion? Humility? Not all of us admire the ostentatiously self-disciplined. But someone like Rosner (who makes his living "help[ing] companies to establish smoking restrictions"—and what kind of job is *that*?) couldn't be expected to understand.

So I like smokers, and I feel sorry for them, even more than for other abused and downtrodden minorities. As the habit wanes, I also feel sorry for the tobacco farmers and cigarette-factory workers whose taxes pay my salary, and for Garland, my long-time tobacconist and friend.

But I must say I'm damned if I feel sorry for the tobacco companies. Like rats leaving a sinking ship, they're diversifying out of the cigarette business as fast as they can. I see here where RJR Nabisco has even developed a "smokeless cigarette"—about the sort of limp-wristed accommodationism you'd expect from a cookie company, isn't it? That's the act of a company that doesn't believe in its product.

I don't like cigarette companies that imply that there's something wrong with smoke. Smoke is their business and they ought to *like* it. I do: one of my early memories is of my grandfather's smoking Camels at a high-school football game—a crisp November evening, and that marvelous fragrance. Sneer if you will, but if people can wax lyrical about wood smoke on the New England air or burning leaves in the small-town Midwest, I reserve the right to my own smelly nostalgia. I smoked for 30 years, and quit for health reasons, not because I didn't like smoke.

So I'd have more respect for RJR if they'd taken a lead from the success of Jolt Cola ("All the sugar, twice the caffeine"). That Jolt is selling out in US college towns tells me that college kids are sick of being told what's good for them by middle-aged health-and-safety fascists. If RJR really wanted to *sell cigarettes*, they wouldn't dink around with gimmicky smokeless cigarette-type nicotine-delivery devices. They'd bring out something like "Death" cigarettes: "All the nicotine, twice the tar." They'd put a skull and crossbones on the pack, print the surgeon general's warning twice the required size, and sell them with slogans like "What the hell!" and "Do you want to live forever?"

If they smelled like those Camels did back in 1950, who could resist?

John Shelton Reed teaches at the University of North Carolina. He hasn't smoked for several years, but is looking forward to starting again when he's told he has six months to live.

Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

But Why the "Red Flag" of Revolution?

◆

I have never been a flag-waver, nor felt much sympathy for howling mobs, particularly when bent on destruction. But since this year, 1989, marks the bicentennial of the world's first and most influential revolution (there is hardly a revolutionary notion or *motif* that cannot be traced back to Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Babeuf, and their spiritual ancestor, Rousseau), we might pause to ask ourselves how it is that the once royal, not to say imperial, color of red should in our time have come to symbolize the cause of the downtrodden proletariat. For it was during the revolutionary turmoil that accompanied the death of France's *ancien régime* that the red flag was first brandished, though not, curiously enough, by proletarians.

It is indeed a curious story, and one more proof of how, like words and everyday expressions, traditional symbols can be semantically inverted and invested with radically different meanings. For a long time red and its first cousin, crimson, were colors closely associated with authority and power. Two thousand years ago, when the tinctorial art was still in its infancy, crimson—or what the Romans called *purpura*—became the privileged color of successive emperors because of the extreme costliness of its production, the hue being derived from a Mediterranean shellfish that gave rise to the famous Tyrian dye. Later, the descendants of Saint Peter having inherited the mantle of the Caesars, the cardinals of Rome took to robing themselves in red.

In the Middle Ages red became the favorite color of the Crusaders, and it was under a scarlet banner with a big

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white cross that Saint Louis (1214-1270) and his French knights went to battle the Saracens in the Holy Land and North Africa. It is probably no accident that red, being essentially a "hot" color (as opposed to the cooler blue), was chosen as the principal color for the flags of Europe's two most ardently Catholic nations. In the case of Poland a white eagle was first superimposed on a red background, the red remaining after the eagle had been removed; in the case of Castille and subsequently of Spain, gold castles were placed on a scarlet ground, where the scarlet has remained to this day.

The kings of France, for their part, preferred to be robed in white, and their heraldic emblem being the three-petaled *fleur-de-lis* (derived from the white iris), the flag of the French monarchy was composed of white *fleurs-de-lis* on a blue background. (This is just a hunch, but I suspect that the blue rectangle and stars in the left-hand corner of our own flag were inspired by those royal French colors and combined with the red-and-white stripes of the Washington family crest to form the Stars and Stripes — the soldiery and mariners of Louis XVI's France having done as much as anyone to ensure the defeat of George III's Redcoats.)

Now let us jump to the watershed year of 1789, which saw the start of the great mutation. On July 20th, six days after the storming of the Bastille, Lafayette, who had returned to France after campaigning in America, and who had been placed in command of the Paris militia, decided that something with a less absolutist connotation than the blue-and-white *fleurs-de-lis* flag was needed to symbolize the new, fondly hoped-for "union" of king and people. Thus was born the tricolor flag, which combined the traditional blue-and-white colors of the House of France with the scarlet oriflamme of Saint Denis, the legendary first bishop-martyr of Paris and the country's patron saint. The relative simplicity of this new flag, with three basic colors matching the ideals of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," made it almost overnight the flag of the Revolution, and more specifically the flag of the triumphant bourgeoisie.

Revolutions being what they are — difficult to control — the members of the constituent Assembly undertook three months later (October 21, 1789) to vote a law authorizing the municipal authorities to proclaim a state of martial law, if necessary, in order to maintain law and order. A red flag — the red flag of danger — was then to be prominently displayed from one of the windows of the town hall, and another paraded through the streets of Paris as the visible signal that all crowds were to disperse. Once order was restored — if necessary by warning shots, followed by firing — the red flag was to be removed and replaced for the next week by a white flag, the symbol of peace and tranquility.

By the summer of 1791 the Revolution had turned sour, and the bourgeoisie, having humbled the aristocracy and stripped it of its privileges and titles, found itself threatened in its turn by revolutionaries of a more radical stripe. The clumsy Louis XVI having bungled an attempt to escape to Belgium with his wife, Marie Antoinette, and a coachful of faithful servitors, the hotheads of the revolutionary Club des Cordeliers (so called because they had set themselves up in a monastery previously occupied by the rope-belt-wearing Franciscans) decided the time had come to get rid of this king who had betrayed his country and his people by trying to flee abroad. On July 17, 1791, after circulating a petition and collecting six thousand signatures, they organized a major turnout on the Champ de Mars (which was then an open parade ground and quite different from the present, Eiffel Tower-dominated *parterre* of lawns, flowerbeds, and gravel walks). While Danton and Camille Desmoulins were working the crowd up to fever pitch with their revolutionary rhetoric, Lafayette turned up at the head of 1,200 National Guardsmen. The red flag, which had already been hung out over the façade of the Hôtel de Ville, now made its appearance on the Champ de Mars, preceding the arrival of the mayor, Bailly, and members of the municipal council. Few persons in the angry crowd saw the flag, nor were they in a mood to disperse peacefully and drift away. The Guardsmen, greeted by stones and curses, had to load their muskets and start firing, and by the time the smoke had cleared one hundred demonstrators were dead.

The "massacre of the Champ de Mars" — for which Lafayette, Bailly, and ultimately Louis XVI were blamed — helped to seal the fate of the French monarchy. But in the immediate wake of the slaughter the red flag of martial law was bitterly denounced in radical pamphlets and newssheets as "the infamous red flag . . . the flag of death, an iniquitous flag, the all too certain signal of the barbarism of dangerous aristocrats, who give a thousand new forms to the infamy of their hideous projects," etc. In short, the red flag was regarded as the emblem of the war that the more prosperous "haves" were waging against the less fortunate "have nots."

But soon, thanks to a kind of chemical reaction produced in the witch's brew of revolutionary fervor, the same red flag of martial law — the "martial law of the sovereign people" — was brandished by the crushed demonstrators of yesterday against "the rebellion of the executive power" — which is to say, against the "rebellion" of Louis XVI, guilty of having been "fanaticized by the clerical party" and of being associated with France's enemies, led by the reactionaries of Marie Antoinette's Austria. The abhorred red flag of yesterday now became the emblem of the extremists and in particular of the Jacobins, taking its place at meetings of the "Society of the Friends of Equality and Liberty" next to the Phrygian bonnet as the symbol of revolutionary *élan*.

Under Napoleon — himself a former Jacobin who had quickly "seen the light" — the red flag of the extremists was all but forgotten, blotted out by the tricolor flag and the even more triumphant green of the French Imperial banners. Not until June 1832 did the red flag return to the forefront of the Paris stage, during the funeral procession of a notoriously republican (and thus anti-Louis-Philippe) general, when a strange black-clad and black-whiskered horseman girdled in a glaring red waistband suddenly appeared out of nowhere brandishing a red flag on which, in bright white letters, were inscribed the words, "Liberty — or Death."

By this time the color red was firmly associated with the libertarian and progressive cause as opposed to the "black" reactionaries of the church —

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whence the title of Stendahl's *Le Rouge et le Noir*. With the onset of industrialization the red flag became the emblem of the first "socialist-revolutionaries," popping up in Paris and Lyon during the textile workers' riots of April 1834. Subsequently driven underground by a ferocious repression, it reappeared in February 1848, when the red blinds were torn from overturned carriages and brandished over the first barricades. On February 24 it was behind a red banner that a frenzied mob stormed Louis-Philippe's Tuileries Palace, and it was with the red silk and red velvet upholstery of its furniture that the triumphant revolutionaries undertook to fashion red buttonhole emblems and Phrygian bonnets.

The red flag of revolutionary militancy had finally come of age, at the very moment when Karl Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto*, was proclaiming the forthcoming dictatorship of the proletariat. As Proudhon, the wild-eyed propounder of the notion that "Property is Theft," put it: "Keep, if you will, the tricolor flag, the symbol of your nationality, but remember that the red flag is the sign of a revolution that will be the last. The red flag is the federal standard of the human race."

Today this symbolic transmutation has come full circle, and there is surely a profound historical irony in the fact that the red flag is now the symbol of the *triumphant* proletariat, of the Red Czars of Muscovy. In Russia the word for "red" (*krassny*) was always closely associated in popular fancy with "wonderful" (*prekrassny*)—which is why the Beautiful Square (*Krassnaya Ploshchad*) of prerevolutionary Russia could become, in one of the greatest semantic travesties of all times, the Red Square of the Soviet Caesars.

Curtis Cate is a historian and biographer who lives in Paris.

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Letter From the Subcontinent

by Marshall W. Fishwick

Passage to India

◆

Though he never came here, Walt Whitman knew India was more than a country: a subcontinent, madhouse of religions, seedbed of civilizations, primordial and immemorial. "Passage to more than India."

How to cope with this vital mess, this messy multiplicity? These hundreds of millions of people in hundreds of thousands of villages? I have learned from earlier trips to try to avoid the clichés of the tourist, moralist, or missionary. But how can I see it through Indian eyes? How can I break the cake of custom?

Spring in India: tiny purple birds dart between banks of flowers. Bicycles, bells, birdsongs: everything moves, murmurs, explodes. The soil is soul-saturated . . . birth death rebirth merge. Wanton destruction and callous neglect cannot dim the aura and the mystery.

Princess Ezra of Hyderabad—widow of the Nizam said to be the world's richest man—has a dinner party. The Begum of Oudh sits amidst her Dobermans and Persian carpets in an old ruin given to her as compensation for Lucknow.

A shadow-thin man with a long stick drags himself forward on the dusty road. Both legs are twisted and deformed. He plants the stick in the dirt, wraps a boneless foot around it, and inches forward. Is he going home? Will he ever get there? Despite all the warnings (begging is a highly organized crime syndicate) I offer him money. He does not stop but looks into my eyes and smiles: I have only seen such a smile in the paintings of Fra Angelico.

In this fourth year of drought, look instead at the abandoned cattle: herds of 20,000 roaming the burnt-out areas of Gujurat and Rajasthan. Or the beggars: over 70 percent of all Indians have no assured employment, and earn less than $100 a year.

Few speak of this in New Delhi, celebrating the 40th anniversary of Indian independence. Festivities are climaxed by a giant Run for Freedom. How many runners? Estimates vary—from 100,000 to 200,000. At the fore is Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in flashy jogging clothes, surrounded by movie stars and cricket players. Then the joyful atmosphere changes: there is a free-for-all at the National Stadium where angry runners go on a rampage. The finishing line banner is torn to shreds, bottles are hurled, offices smashed, anti-organizer slogans shouted. The police move in with *lathis*.

There are other ominous signs. Terrorism grips the Punjab; the TNV are on a rampage in Tripura. Gurkhas run amuck in Bengal; the Jharkhand Movement gains momentum in Bihar. Extremists step up the struggle in Nagaland, while rebels bitterly fight the government in Manipur. Indian troops pour into Sri Lanka—will it be their Vietnam? Elsewhere, observers report, separatist movements are taking shape. "Why are we still grappling with the same problems (deficits, poverty, inflation, illiteracy, one-party politics) 40 years after independence?" asks Srinivase Raghaven. "We face a litany of unkept promises."

India is falling apart. But then, India has always been falling apart. History was still blind when this great rich landmass was overrun. Invaders keep coming (Aryan, Mongol, Muslim, Greek, Tartar, British, CIA) but India remains India. Somehow their warmth and wisdom wrap around them like a blanket.

In native eyes, the shifty look, the built-in insecurity; on every street the system breaking down. Some can push no more: beggars, melted away by leprosy, bodies ending at the waist, trunks without limbs, hulks that crawl and go bump in the night. Yet they neither complain nor despair—they endure. I enter the back country, the preindustrial world, determined to see places sacred to the Lord Buddha, born

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in northern India 25 centuries ago. What did he conclude? All life is suffering. Nothing is permanent. The ego is an illusion. Escape this suffering by using your mind—prayers and supplications are meaningless. Why should the universe worry about you? Be a lamp unto yourself.

His symbol is the lotus: an incredibly beautiful purple flower coming up out of India's filth. No wonder Buddha wanted out of the cycle. He achieved nirvana. The art of living transformed into living art . . .

Yet the Indians rejected Buddha—just as the Jews rejected Jesus. But "rejected" isn't the right word for India. Hinduism smothered Buddhism with its all-encompassing embrace. Everything is possible, nothing is certain. Here art imitates life. After death, rebirth: the two dominant film stars, Vinod Khanna and Dimple Kapadia, suddenly rise from the cinematic scrap heap to born-again stardom. The television craze for the latest Western programs disappears, as the two most popular serials (*Buniyad* and *Ramayana*), hark back to ancient epics. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who seemed so popular and secure, begins to bear a regrettable resemblance to his mother. His ideology is increasingly the "I" in the Congress and among a coterie of friends who form the most exclusive country club in the country.

Governments change, but Hinduism remains. To know India, one has to know this. On to Benares (which Indians call Kashi)—Shiva's birthplace, home of the gods, navel of the world. This is a Holy City: the Hindus' Mecca and Jerusalem all in one. There is no place like it—a motley ragamuffin veneer, hiding the sacred under the sordid. People and animals crowded into narrow winding streets that were well-worn before Babylon fell. Pali chants, kerosene lamps, smoking cow dung. Pigs, boars, dogs, ducks, goats, cows, oxen, water buffalo . . . a hundred thousand widows, migrating to Kashi to beg from pilgrims who come day and night. In their midst, swarms of Japanese tourists, clicking duty-free cameras.

I, too, carry a camera: icon of the outsider, of one who does not know (like Buddha) that all things are impermanent. Can the camera stop time, catch the moment, or at least the illusion? In a world alive with incredible images, what does one photograph?

Walking towards Mother Ganga (the Ganges River), I suddenly confront a leathery, ageless old woman with the noble face one finds in cave paintings. She is blind. Perhaps if I am very quiet . . . but she hears me. "Who are you? What do you want?" "Only to take your picture." "Why?" "Because I like your beautiful face." "Picture cost you money." "Fine. I'll pay you." Less cautious now, I find a good angle, click. She begins to talk. Her husband was killed years ago in the Great War. She went blind. Her children deserted her. Now a neighbor brings her every day to this spot, takes her home at night. Sometimes people give her money—what do blind people do in my country? We talk. I stammer. I hurt for her. "I must go," holding out the money.

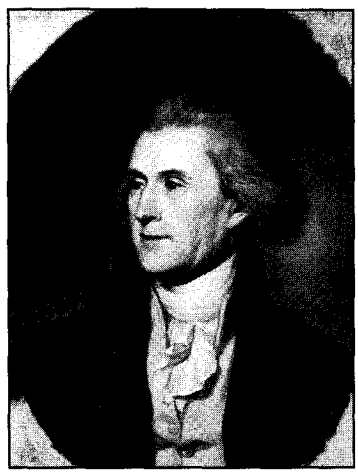
"No money," she says sternly.

"Please, I have plenty, and I promised . . . " She is firm. "No money. You are my son."

Passage to more than India.

Marshall W. Fishwick is a professor of communications at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg.

LIBERAL ARTS



THOMAS JEFFERSON ON IMMIGRATION

Civil government being the sole object of forming societies, its administration must be conducted by common consent. Every species of government has its specific principles. Ours perhaps are more peculiar than those of any other in the universe. It is a composition of the freest principles of the English constitution, with others derived from natural right and natural reason. To these nothing can be more opposed than the maxims of absolute monarchies. Yet, from such, we are to expect the greatest number of emigrants. They will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth; or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another. It would be a miracle were they to stop precisely at the point of temperate liberty. These principles, with their language, they will transmit to their children. In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass. I may appeal to experience, during the present contest, for a verification of these conjectures. But, if they be not certain in event, are they not possible, are they not probable? Is it not safer to wait with patience 27 years and three months longer, for the attainment of any degree of population desired, or expected? May not our government be more homogeneous, more peaceable, more durable? Suppose 20 millions of republican Americans thrown all of a sudden into France, what would be the condition of that kingdom? If it would be more turbulent, less happy, less strong, we may believe that the addition of half a million of foreigners to our present numbers would produce a similar effect here.

—from *Notes on The State of Virginia*, published 1787.

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LAW

Making English Our National Language

by Stanley Diamond

The 1988 election marked another milestone in the effort to clarify our nation's language policy and preserve English as our common language. Arizona, Colorado, and Florida voters all passed ballot initiatives to make English the official language of state government.

This raises the number of states that have declared English their official language to 17, and momentum is building in other states for similar action. But why, some ask, after two hundred years without any official policy on language, do we need to act to preserve the traditional role of English? What has prompted the voters in these states to make English the official language?

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is one of the nation's oldest and largest Hispanic organizations. At the time of its founding, in 1929, the members of the organization created a statement of purpose to provide clear direction for the future work of the organization.

According to that statement, one of the group's stated goals is "[t]o foster the acquisition and facile use of the official language of our country that we may hereby equip ourselves and our families for the fullest enjoyment of our rights and privileges and the efficient discharge of our duties and obligations to this, our country."

This statement is a fine example of the proud and patriotic tradition of Hispanic-Americans. However, it is also important because it shows how far the consensus on the importance of English has eroded in recent years.

Unlike the founders of LULAC, some contemporary political leaders, like former Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre, have rejected the traditional consensus on English as a common language, saying, "Language is not necessary to the system. Nowhere does the Constitution say that English is our language." Ferre also told the *Tampa Tribune* that "[w]ithin ten years there will not be a word of English spoken—English is not Miami's official language—one day residents will have to learn Spanish or leave."

Maurice Ferre, unfortunately, is not alone in holding these views. A report prepared for the Department of Education on the proceedings of a conference sponsored by the National Association for Bilingual Education reported that "[m]ost speakers expounded at length on the need for, and eventuality of, a multilingual, multicultural United States of America with a national language policy, citing English and Spanish as the two 'legal languages.'"

This is a dramatic shift from the sensible and responsible policies of the founders of LULAC and other ethnic associations that have supported our historic consensus on the need to maintain a common language.

In the last few decades we have seen a number of political concessions to those who favor greater official recognition of languages other than English. In reaction to the cultural consciousness movement of the 60's and 70's, government has been increasingly reluctant to press immigrants to learn the English language, lest it be accused of "cultural imperialism." Rather than insisting that it is the immigrant's duty to learn the language of this country, government has instead acted as if it has a duty to accommodate the immi-

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grant in his native language.

A prime example of this can be found in the continuing debate over federal and state policies on bilingual education. At times these policies have come dangerously close to making the main goal of this program the maintenance of the immigrant child's native language, rather than the early acquisition of English.

Under the dominant method of bilingual education used throughout this country, non-English-speaking students are taught all academic subjects such as math, science, and history exclusively in their native language. English is taught as a separate subject. The problem with this method is that there is no objective standard used to measure whether a child has learned enough English to be placed in classes where academic instruction is entirely in English. As a result, some children have been kept in native language classes for six years.

In the Newhall School District in California, some Hispanic parents are raising their voices in criticism of the district's bilingual education program, which relies on native language instruction. Their children complain of being systematically segregated from their English-speaking peers. Now in high school, these students cite the failure of the program to teach them English first as the reason for being years behind their classmates.

Even more alarming is a situation in the Berkeley (California) Unified School District, where educators have recognized that all-native-language instruction would be an inadequate response to the needs of all non-English-speaking students. Challenged by a student body that spoke more than four different languages and by budgetary constraints, teachers and administrators responded with innovative language programs that utilized many methods of teaching English to non-English speakers.

That school district is now in court answering charges that the education it provided was inadequate because it did not provide transitional native language instruction for every non-English speaker. What was introduced 20 years ago as an experimental project has—despite inconclusive research—become the only acceptable method for bilingual education advocates.

If native language instruction is not the answer, are we forced to return to the old, discredited, sink-or-swim approach? No: as shown in Berkeley and other school districts, there are a number of alternative methods that demonstrably provide non-English-speaking students with the special help they need, while avoiding the problems of all-native-language instruction.

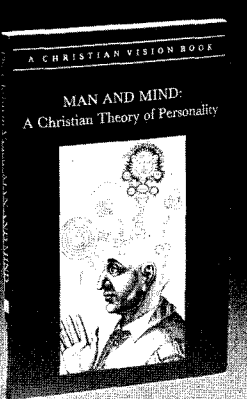
Sheltered English and English as a Second Language (ESL) are just two programs that have been shown to be extremely effective in quickly making children proficient in English. Federal funds for these methods, however, are restricted to only 25 percent of the total amount allotted for bilingual education.

There is another highly visible shift in federal policy that demonstrates the eroding support of government for our common language: the requirement for bilingual voting ballots. Little evidence has ever been presented to show the need for ballots in other languages. Even prominent Hispanic organizations acknowledge that currently more than 90 percent of native-born Hispanics are fluent in English, and more than half of that population is English monolingual.

Furthermore, if the proponents of bilingual ballots are correct when they claim that the absence of native language ballots prevents non-English-speaking citizens from exercising their right to vote, then current bilingual ballot requirements are clearly unfair, because they provide assistance to certain groups of voters while ignoring others. Under current federal law, native language ballots are required only for certain language groups—those speaking Spanish, Asian, or Native American languages. European or African immigrants are not provided ballots in their native language even in jurisdictions covered by the Voting Rights Act.

More importantly, we cannot continue to overlook the message we are

MAN AND MIND:
A CHRISTIAN THEORY OF PERSONALITY



Why are so many psychologists hostile to religious explanations of human behavior? In what has been hailed as a path-breaking study, nine psychologists, theologians and philosophers offer the reason: Thomas J. Burke, Stephen R. Briggs, Mary Vander Goot, Paul C. Vitz, Charles Ransford, Merold Westphal, William Kirk Kilpatrick, John S. Reist, Jr., and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen.

[illegible] intellectual issues in the field of psychology today.
—Richard John Neuhaus
author, *The Naked Public Square*

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sending to immigrants about the connection between English language ability and citizenship when we print ballots in other languages. The ballot is the primary symbol of civic duty. When we tell immigrants that they should learn English, yet offer them full voting participation in their native language, I fear our actions speak louder than our words.

While previous government policies only required the use of foreign languages by government or public institutions, they now are moving to require the use of other languages by private citizens. In a recent federal court case, the US Justice Department submitted a brief arguing that private citizens collecting signatures to place an initiative question on a state ballot had violated federal law because they had not printed their petitions in Spanish.

All these things indicate the extent to which the traditional recognition of English as our *de facto* official language has broken down. The "official" status of English that was assumed by the founders of LULAC can no longer be taken for granted.

As a nation, we must reassert our desire to retain the role of English by declaring English our official language. As a nation of immigrants, made up of people from all corners of the globe, we share no common race, religion, or ethnic background. One important bond that we do share, however, is a common language.

Our history has taught us that if government holds fast to our tradition of English as the official language of the United States, then newcomers to our nation will respond to this incentive and learn our common language.

If, however, we continue to duplicate every government document, brochure, or booklet in a multitude of languages, and grant further official recognition to an immigrant's native tongue, we may be destroying the incentives necessary to bring people quickly into the mainstream of American society.

Stanley Diamond is the acting chairman of US English. He was formerly a special assistant to Senator S.I. Hayakawa, the founder of US English, and led the successful effort in 1986 to pass Proposition 63, which declared English the official language of California.

LIBERAL ARTS

ARBITER OF ACCEPTABLE OPINION

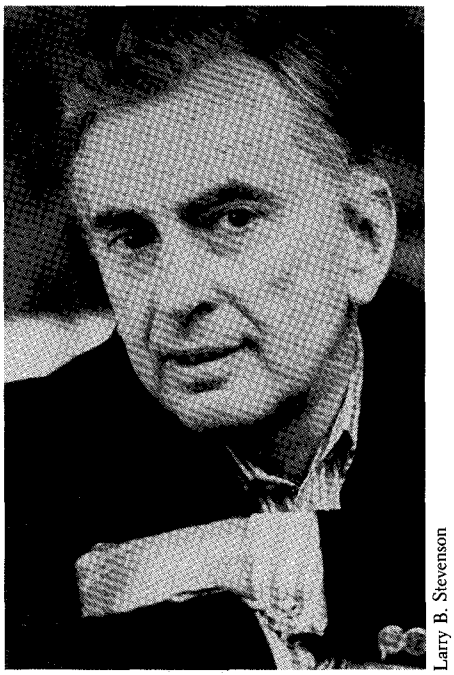
"I can't think of any writer more certain to have exactly the right opinion on absolutely everything."

—*Thomas M. Disch on Gore Vidal in* The Washington Post Book World

LETTERS

Gnawing Away at Vidal

by Bill Kauffman



Larry B. Stevenson

"I hate the American Empire, and I love the old republic," says polemicist, essayist, and historical novelist Gore Vidal.

We do not live in a golden age for homegrown and corn-fed radical critics. Legal restrictions on political speech remain few, but informal strictures and the passage of time have muted those who remember—and like—the free, landed republic that this country used to be, before World War II and the monolithic Cold War state that it bore. We are an empire today, the antipode of the virtuous agrarian society that our forefathers envisaged.

Woe betide the independent man, unbeholden to university or think tank, who speaks these truths. Whether left or right, blueblood or wetback, dullard or high wit, the foe of empire invites the pillory. He's gonna get creamed.

Enter Gore Vidal.

No public figure in present-day America takes a more brutal thrashing from the Arbiters of Acceptable Opinion than Gore Vidal: novelist, essayist, acid celebrity. Although his work, particularly his remarkable chronicle of American history (*Burr*, *Lincoln*, *1876*, *Empire*, *Washington, D.C.*), is wildly popular with the middlebrow audience, Vidal is vilified by the "vital center," that loud and puissant band of Cold War liberals and Pentagon-obsessed conservatives.

These attacks have all the subtlety of the commode flush. For instance:

—*The New Republic* branded a Vidal essay on Israel's US supporters, notably the polemicist Norman Podhoretz, as "brazen racist hate" and pronounced the essayist "ready for the funny farm."

—*National Review* labeled that same essay "anti-Semitic screaming" by an author who "enjoys a special immunity as an avowed homosexual."

—Irving Howe of the socialist journal *Dissent* found the disputed essay "a racist diatribe."

There is more, in the same vein, but you get the gist. Vidal has offended all three pointy-heads of the regnant American political triangle: the Manhattan-Washington-based neoconservatives, the Manhattan-Washington-based New Class conservatives, and the Manhattan-Washington-based corporate-state socialists. In short, the power elite.

Why the Vidal-hatred?

Let us first dispose of the obvious, and wholly unsatisfactory, explanation: his open homosexuality. Vidal has never concealed his taste for inversion; indeed, he published *The City and the Pillar* in 1948, at no small risk to his

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career. Too, he has baited William F. Buckley Jr. on this subject, so deftly that the imperturbable Buckley once threatened him: "You queer . . . I'll sock you in the g-----n face."

But Vidal is no Harvey Milk. He scoffed at the idea of a "gay political identity" in his quixotic 1982 California campaign for the Senate; apart from endorsing the repeal of sodomy laws on libertarian grounds, Vidal has ignored the homosexual agenda.

Moreover—and anyone who has spent any amount of time in Washington, DC, can attest to this—the grant-munching conservative herd is rife with gay men. Roy Cohn, Terry Dolan, Robert Bauman, and their closeted brethren make Gore Vidal look like a model of candor.

So the Vidal-loathing has much deeper roots than the Beltway Right's purported aversion to homosexuality. The real source of the rancor is the American past, an epoch that Gore Vidal has spent the last two decades excavating and explicating in his self-described role as "current biographer" of the United States.

Vidal told a young interviewer in *The Progressive*: "It's thirty-five years we've been a garrison state. Somebody your age doesn't even remember what the country was like before. I do, and the country was a very good one. It had its problems, but the place worked. For one thing, we believed in the country more. Now nobody understands it. It isn't taught."

We have forgotten our past. In Vidal's own words, "[w]e have no public memory of anything that happened before last Tuesday." Pre-Depression America has been surgically excised from the national memory, save for its quainter aspects. We are not supposed to know that alternatives once existed—still exist—to industrial capitalism, the permanent war economy, and rootless man. Gore Vidal has not forgotten, and his work is a monument to that past, witness to the climacteric events that marked the way from republic to empire . . . and back again, maybe someday.

"The historical novel," Henry James once wrote Sarah Orne Jewett, "is condemned . . . to a fatal *cheapness* . . . You may multiply the little facts that can be got from pictures and documents, relics and prints as much as you like—the *real* thing is almost impossible to do."

Gore Vidal has done it. Grandson of a populist Oklahoma senator, slashing wit of the Kennedy demimonde, Vidal has ever regarded politics at close range. He perfectly apprehends the constitution of the statesman; he is a lucent and experienced anatomist of power. An anatomist, moreover, who appreciates Henry Adams's twin dicta: "Power is poison," and politics is "the systematic organization of hatreds."

With intelligence and caustic humor, Vidal has vivified American history and its great actors. He peoples his chronicles with men of letters—William Leggett, William Cullen Bryant, John Hay, Henry Adams—who are quick with the epigram, the gnome, the illuminating throwaway.

Beyond his flair for reanimating dead statesmen, Vidal succeeds because he has found a grand unifying theme: the growth of the American empire. He has descried, as have few others, the irreconcilable conflicts that delivered us unto that empire: the early tension between republican ideals and the lure of the western lands; Lincoln's cataclysmic destruction of the loose confederation of states and strengthening of a brand new, centralized, and unitary state; the withering of republican virtue in the flames of the Great Barbecue; Teddy Roosevelt's vanquishment of the principles of 1776; the exponential growth of government in the wake of the Second World War. (Vidal's sixth entry in the chronicle will use the League of Nations debate as a backdrop; will pious old Parson Woodrow Wilson ever be the same?)

Vidal has plaintively summarized his politics as such: "I hate the American Empire, and I love the old republic." He can be didactic on the point: witness this exchange, from the turn-of-the-century novel *Empire*, between Secretary of State John Hay and Henry Adams, who is in so many ways Vidal's kindred soul.

> "John, it is empire you all want, and it is empire that you have got, and at such a small price, when you come to think of it."
>
> "What price is that?" Hay could tell from the glitter in Adams's eye that the answer would be highly unpleasant.
>
> "The American republic. You've finally got rid of it. For good."

The parallels between Vidal and Henry Adams are many and significant: aristocratic birth, long years in Europe, hints of anti-Semitism, hostility to formal education. To emphasize the affinity, Vidal has made Adams the gray eminence of the latter chronicles, offering droll—and very Vidalian—commentaries.

The most pertinent kinship between the two is ideological. Vidal and Adams are conservatives in a very singular American vein. They are exponents—

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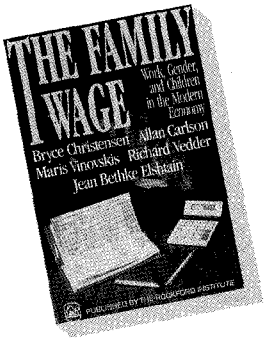

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if not embodiments — of Ben Franklin's notion of republican virtue. Disparage "the love of power and the love of money," the rake told the Constitutional Convention, and elect to office "a sufficient number of wise and good men."

Underneath Gore Vidal's cynical skin beats the heart of a good-government mugwump, surrounded by fetid grafters and power-seekers, forlornly seeking those fabled few good men. The mugwump may be harsh and caustic, as in Adams's novel of the Gilded Age, *Democracy*, but the idealism is never quite extinguished.

Thus Adams, the self-proclaimed "conservative Christian anarchist," and Vidal, whom we might tag "patrician ambisexual republican," share an ardent and anachronistic passion for the old republic. They are not naifs, blind to the evil that men do; indeed, for sworn enemies of power, both spent an inordinate amount of time within power's ambit. But they show a familial concern for their country. They bleed richly for it, and when they see its government acting the bully or the slattern they inveigh and protest with the outrage of one who witnesses the desecration of an ancestral tombstone.

In *Empire*, an extended wake for the old republic, Vidal finally finds his milieu in the dimming twilight of the native aristocracy. Sitting in a parlor with the Henrys, Adams, James, and John Hay, belittling the Blaines and Roosevelts, the corrupt and imbecilic, the parvenu enemies of the republic — this is Gore Vidal's home.

Vidal's best books (*Burr*, *Lincoln*, *Empire*) are object lessons in the uses of political power. His Abraham Lincoln has all the depth and appeal of the mythic character found in history books, but the novelist's Father Abraham differs sharply from the hagiographic porridge fed grade-schoolers. Vidal's Lincoln is a *politician*: a skillful manipulator of men, to be sure, but even more he is the grand reconstructor of our polity. He effaces the Founders' bequest and substitutes, through war, a national government muscular and triumphant, bound for glory and conquest.

Vidal conveys the grandeur of the Rail-splitter's achievement through the eyes of Lincoln's secretary of state: "For the first time, Seward understood the nature of Lincoln's political genius. He had been able to make himself absolute dictator without ever letting anyone suspect that he was anything more than a joking, timid backwoods lawyer."

His Lincoln is a tyrant, preternaturally shrewd and personally engaging, but a tyrant nevertheless. Vidal's obvious affection for the protean and undeniably great Lincoln perhaps accounts for the book's reverent tone; the author's awe, however, does not cloud his quite unfashionable understanding of the centrality of the Civil War to what the textbooks call the American Experience.

Vidal captures the overriding political significance of the war in this brief exchange in *Empire* between John Hay and Elihu Root, two examples of fast-fading republican virtue.

> "Poor Jefferson thought that he had won, and now we are all Hamiltonians."
>
> "Thanks to the Civil War."

Recall that the incident that roused Vidal to his attack on Podhoretz was the *Commentary* editor's statement that "to me, the Civil War is as remote and irrelevant as the War of the Roses." The Civil War! (In interviews, Vidal upholds the Confederacy's right to secede — and when's the last time you heard a Northern intellectual proclaim himself a Copperhead?)

Vidal's knotty political iconoclasm has long perplexed liberal observers. He was one of the precious few with the courage to praise Edmund Wilson's 1963 book, *The Cold War and the Income Tax*. Wilson's lament for his beloved country was met with averted eyes and whispers about senility when it appeared, at Camelot's zenith: fancy an educated man complaining that the national government was accumulating too much power!

Vidal seconded Wilson's testament, warning that Washington's postwar power-grab was creating "a rigid Byzantine society where the individual is the state's creature, his life the property of a permanent self-perpetuating bureaucracy."

Vidal's sympathy for rebels and nonconformists extends to those on the right, from tax-protesters to populist tribune George Wallace. Indeed, Vidal endorses Wallace's sage adage that there ain't a dime's worth of difference between the Republicans and Democrats. "There is only one political party in the United States," insists Vidal, "and it is the Property Party," controlled by a vital center directorate of plutocrats, bureaucrats, generals, and various well-off evil-doers. A central function of the Property Party is the stigmatization of *real* dissent — exemplified by maligning Wallace as a malevolent racist, or Barry Goldwater as a bloodthirsty nuke-crazed monster (unlike . . . Truman?), or Gore Vidal as an anti-Semitic nut.

Vidal elucidates his conspiratorial view in the essay "Homage to Daniel Shays." If the crankiness sometimes intrudes, Vidal reminds me of Delmore Schwartz's truism that "paranoids have real enemies, too." Besides, the Property Party can do that to a man: Henry Adams tells us that he "had become little better than a crank" after inhaling the rank smoke of the bankers and politicians in the brave new world of the 1870's that Abraham Lincoln had wrought.

The shameful abandonment of early American political values — liberty, decentralism, self-rule — explains, I believe, the shrieking hostility to Gore Vidal. For despite the tartness, the homosexuality, even the seasonal expatriatism, Vidal is an authentic champion of a peculiarly American conservatism, a conservatism vastly nobler than that of the typewriter hawks and blow-dried Republicans of Washington, DC.

With the countenance of an ante-bellum aristocrat and a flair for the eloquent savagery once so common in American political writing, Gore Vidal is the avenging wraith of Henry Adams, merciless with the empire-lovers and power-lusting intellectuals who have, barnacle-like, leeched themselves onto our decrepit ship of state.

I have, admittedly, ignored Vidalianisms that are inconvenient to my argument or offensive to my tastes. His crack that "the average American voter is forty-seven, blue collar, white, intensely racist . . . and what little he knows of the Bill of Rights he doesn't like" is the sort of Westchester liberal garbage that one expects from a touch-hold relation of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis *et al.* He is overly partial to fools like Eleanor Roosevelt

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and Bella Abzug. His most notorious work, *Myra Breckenridge*, leaves me cold. He is disrespectful of, er, family values that I hold dear.

No matter. Vidal's novels and essays will outlast his carping contemporaries. *Burr* and *Lincoln* and *Empire* and even "The Empire-Lovers Strike Back" will be read long after back issues of *The New Republic* molder forgotten. But it remains for conservatives of some future generation to read Gore Vidal as a discerning critic of the empire that Abraham Lincoln, by crushing the localist Confederate rebellion, sired so many years ago. May the blind give birth to the sighted!

Someday the American Empire, like all empires, will collapse. The republic will probably be buried under the debris. And in the ruins of what once constituted mankind's finest political achievement, archaeologists will discover in the witty dissections of Gore Vidal a prolonged and heartfelt jeremiad. The pity, you will understand, is that he was not heeded.

Bill Kauffman's novel, Every Man a King, *is forthcoming from Soho Press.*

POP CULTURE

Bam! Thwap! Prole! Comics Go Political

by Evans Johnson

Fans of George Bush pulled an unusual weapon from their political arsenals in the 1988 campaign—comic books. Delegates and hangers-on at the Democratic Party National Convention in Atlanta reportedly were upset when handed copies of a cartoon magazine ridiculing the public record of Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis. The appearance of the "attack" comic book, entitled *Magical Mike*, was indicative of a trend—funny books are no longer produced or read simply for entertainment.

Magical Mike was created by Dick Hafer, who bills himself as the "Comics Commando." Hafer has built a reputation within conservative American political circles for his feature-length editorial cartoon satires about liberal causes. Quoting heavily from both liberal and conservative newspapers, Hafer lampooned Dukakis. He also urged readers to "make this book a collector's item," by "getting Mike to autograph your copy when he comes to your area to perform his quick-change act. Just ask him . . . he'll be happy to oblige."

Dukakis supporters struck back, drawing on the talents of mainstream fantasy comic book writers and illustrators working for the third largest producer of such magazines in the United States, Eclipse Comics. Their comic book, *Brought to Light*, was available in time for the November elections. According to an employee at Village Comics in New York, who had seen advance copies of the 72-page magazine, it publicized "the incredible record of the Reagan administration's

THE CHRISTIC INSTITUTE RESEARCHERS DISCOVERED THAT FEMA, THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, HAD EXTENSIVE AND SHOCKING PLANS, WHICH INCLUDED "READINESS EXERCISES" CONDUCTED AROUND THE COUNTRY TO PREPARE TO ROUND UP, "IN THE EVENT OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY", 400,000 UNDOCUMENTED REFUGEES...
...AND PUT THEM IN TEN HUGE DETENTION CAMPS AROUND THE COUNTRY.
THEY HAD ANOTHER "READINESS EXERCISE" WHICH WAS TO MOVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE PENTAGON DOWN TO THE STATE NATIONAL GUARDS...
We the People
...GET GIVEN TO STATE EMERGENCY CENTERS, WHICH WOULD BE MANNED BY TROOPS FORMED FROM VIGILANTE AND RIGHT WING SURVIVALIST GROUPS.
WHEN THE EQUIPMENT WOULD BE RETURNED TO THE NATIONAL GUARD IT WOULD BE REVEALED THAT THE COST OF REPAIR HAD DOUBLED... TO NOBODY'S SURPRISE AT THE PENTAGON.
ONLY HALF SOLDIERS RETURNED SAFELY TO BASE. THE OTHER HALF WOULD BE SENT TO CENTRAL AMERICA TO ARM THE CONTRAS.

A page from Brought to Light, *the Christic Institute-funded comic (or "graphic docudrama," as its authors call it) about the 1984 attempt to assassinate contra leader Eden Pastora.*

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THE IMMIGRANTS

Actual live interviews from the files of the U.S. Government's National Archives!

Eleven immigrants to the United States tell the stories of their lives in a series of audiocassettes prepared especially for Mass Communications, Inc. Taped during informal conversations, these men and women relate what they remember of the towns where they grew up, their families and schooling, the reasons that impelled them to emigrate, the journey by land and sea and the beginnings of life in the new country.

Most of those interviewed came during the peak decades of immigration to the United States, 1900 to 1920. It is fortunate that many who came so long ago are still alive, and eager to share their experiences. They came from Poland, Italy, Turkish Armenia, China, Russia, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Mexico. Some have achieved success or wealth, some neither.

But every interview becomes, as it develops, an important human document. Characters emerge, with all their strengths and weaknesses, shedding new light on the roots of the American people. In each life story the important events of recent history are reflected to an astonishing degree: the break up of ancient empires, the upheavals of World War I, the Russian revolution, Irish freedom struggles, the rise of Hitler. The reminiscences give human dimension to these tumultuous events. And as we follow the new Americans in their first steps on these shores, we hear echoes of the Depression and of the rise of labor; we obtain glimpses into racial fears, the status of minorities, the power of ethnic groups.

See detailed descriptions at right.

Robert Fritz, born in Sweden, 1885 — When Robert Fritz left his native Sweden in 1903, he felt no sadness. He did not like his new stepmother; and, besides, he was of army age and did not want to serve. He wanted to "get somewhere." Still brisk and forward looking in his late eighties, he describes life in rural Sweden at the start of the Century, the trip across England by train in 1903, from Hull to Liverpool, and the sea voyage. He talks about the Swedes in the United States, his first job in a New England mill town, and the steps that led to his own insurance business which he still runs.

Frank Gallucci, born in Italy, 1899 — As a boy, Frank Gallucci used to work on the farm with his father, from dawn until it grew dark. There was no money, so he left the village at fifteen and went to Rome to find work. In World War I he served with the Italian army, got a taste of travel and decided, in 1920, to try the United States, "to take a chance, like Columbus." In colorful, earthy language, he describes the hard physical work he did at first — on railroads, and as a coal miner for ten years, then the Depression, and a succession of restaurant jobs in New York. In 1941 he and a friend invested $600 each to open a restaurant in the Bronx; it was a successful enterprise, which he sold only a few years ago, after being robbed.

Albert Abrahamian, born in Armenia, 1906 — In a small mountain village in Turkey, within sight of the Euphrates River, an Armenian child never questioned the division between the Turkish and Armenian communities. In Armenian homes, the men were craftsmen; each family kept beehives; a shepherd led everyone's livestock to pasture every morning. In short, life continued unchanged for generations. The outbreak of World War I caught the entire community in a tragic whirlwind; most Armenians were rounded up and murdered, others dispersed, never to return. "...so their purpose was to really, actually cause genocide, eliminate the whole problem of the Armenian question..." Albert Abrahamian was a boy of eight when he fled with his mother, a brother and a sister. Pursued by Turks, they sought refuge in Russia, only to find themselves in the front lines of the Russian revolution. Resilient and enterprising, the young family managed to survive through seven years of wandering, then finally in 1921 they made their way to the United States, where their father had emigrated earlier.

Jacob Potofsky, born in Russia, 1894 — In Chicago in 1908, there were few jobs open to a Russian boy with scant knowledge of English. Like many immigrants, Jacob Potofsky found employment in a large clothing factory. "...if you lost a spool which was empty, they would charge you sixty cents for it. If you break a needle...they would make a charge...if you by accident make a cut when you use the scissors... they would charge you for half the pair of pants..." Such abuses shocked the thoughtful teen-ager; within months of his arrival he was helping to organize the workers. Years of involvement in the cause of labor were crowned by his election as President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, in 1946. Now retired, Potofsky tells of growing up in Russia, of anti-semitism and the fear of pogroms, of early revolutionary activities. The rise of the American labor movement comes to life through his memoir.

Daniel Szabados, born in Hungary, 1896 — "I went to my town...and oh...I don't advise anybody to go home that late...fifty years after..." Daniel Szabados came to the United States from Hungary in 1912 as a boy of sixteen, hoping to earn enough in a few years to return and buy land, as was the custom among the men in his village. World War I changed everyone's expectations; Szabados became a skilled mechanic, married, raised a family. In 1960, he returned to Hungary, to see the sisters he had left as little girls, to reacquaint himself with his homeland. His impressions are described with fiery eloquence.

Charles T. Rice, born in Ireland, 1893 — "I was born in the little parish of Tyholland in 1893, the youngest of a family of ten children. My father was a noted Fenian leader. Now the Fenians were a militant organization formed in the middle 18th Century in Ireland, and their objective was a complete freedom of Ireland and a separation from England." With these words a New York City attorney, Charles T. Rice, begins a narrative that portrays several generations of intense involvement in the struggle for Irish independence. Rice tells of his father's dramatic struggles with the Fenians, of imprisonment and eventual exile to the United States; of his own childhood, migration to the United States in 1908, and his lifelong activities on Ireland's behalf in New York City. Through it all we glimpse a portrait of a large, loving family, helping its members to succeed in New York at the turn of the Century.

William D. Lee, born in China, 1897 — In China at the turn of the Century most villages were built along similar lines, because "if we build it different, then they said we try to overthrow the Ch'ing dynasty." William D. Lee remembers life in China in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, and talks about his father, who had gone to the United States during the gold rush, then returned to his ancestral village. Lee himself attended school in Canton, then sailed for San Francisco in 1914, hoping to continue his education in California. He describes the disappointments that punctuate his life on the West Coast, his return to China to find a suitable bride, the rewards of his current work with senior citizens.

Alfonso Aréchiga, born in Mexico, 1913; Alfonso Aréchiga, Jr., born in Mexico, 1936 — Alfonso Aréchiga brought his family to California from Mexico in the mid-1940's. He had crossed the border for the first time in 1943 as part of the "bracero" program, which was meant to relieve war-time labor shortages in the United States. He spent six months picking grapes and tomatoes, then came again the following year to work for the Santa Fe Railroad, living in a box car. There were no jobs in Mexico; he decided to move his wife and sons to a housing project in Richmond, California. He is retired now; Alfonso, Jr. has his own mortgage business. Proud of each other, father and son talk of their lives and attitudes in counterpoint. The younger man articulates his feelings about achievement and discrimination, ethnic pride and minority status in the United States.

Victoria Lemanski, born in Poland, 1901 — On a Sunday in a small village in Poland, a young woman would attend church in the morning, come home to feed the livestock, go to mass again at three o'clock, then go dancing — polkas and waltzes — with the other young people. "I tell you the truth, it was a very nice village," remembers Victoria Lemanski, who left in 1921, when she was twenty. Yet there were eight children in the family, and not enough money to support them all. So one sister went to the United States, worked for a while, then sent for another sister. "That's how they bring each other to the United States...one by one." She describes her jobs in the new country — in a factory, a restaurant, as a hired girl in various homes — then marriage and her own family, until the Depression finds her using her skill on the sewing machine to help support her family. Her pride in work, her strong, resilient nature shine through her recollections.

Fanny Loria, born in Germany, 1913 — Berlin, 1933. A Jewish girl has just begun her studies at the university when Hitler comes to power. Her family feels sure he will not last, but Fanny Loria will not stay in Germany. She finds a job in Athens, marries just so she can become a Greek citizen; when the German army sweeps across Europe, she is arrested with thousands of Greek Jews and deported to a concentration camp. Her story is too painful for human ears to hear, and yet it must be heard. Sparing no detail, she describes the cattle cars that took them to the infamous Auschwitz; the process by which the Nazis separated those to be killed at once from those destined for hard labor; hunger, humiliations, beatings; the horrors of the gas chambers. Three years and a myriad nightmares later, the survivors are forced to march across Europe toward some other hell, when they are met by the vanguard of the Allied armies. For Fanny Loria, many months then passed while mind and body sought to heal the wounds; months spent in hospitals, displaced persons camps, working for the Allied armies, until finally a chance to sail away from Europe, and toward a new life.

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involvement in the Central American drug trade, and the CIA-contra war against Nicaragua." Specifically, he said, "it would target the relationship between Vice President George Bush and Panamanian strongman General Manuel Noriega," who has been indicted by a Florida court on charges of drug trafficking.

The appearance of comic books in the presidential campaign reflects a growing tendency within the realm of comic bookdom to link the multitude of superheroes to current political, social, and environmental issues. The mainstream comics have progressed steadily and profitably along political lines in recent years. Their readers are exposed to increasingly liberal views of global sociopolitical issues.

The comic book firms would not respond to my requests for interviews with comic book writers and editors. However, a fairly interesting profile of an assistant editor appears in the September 1988 issue of Marvel's *G.I. Joe*. Bobbie Chase writes that her hobbies include "making fun of politicians." Her list of pet peeves is headed by "Ronald Reagan" and "television evangelists," and "the Moral Majority and other fascist organizations."

Several mass-market superheroes aligned themselves with détente in the heady first two years of the Soviet regime of Mikhail Gorbachev. As the words *glasnost* and *perestroika* became commonplace in the US press, comics were quick to respond. In late 1986, DC's Green Lantern Corps (GLC) —a squad of controversial extraterrestrials—suffered a serious split between advocates of Gorbachev's restructuring, and those aliens who thought earthly politics should be left alone. The "dumbest" of the green aliens had been befriended by an American Communist while attending a baseball game in California. The man invited the alien to visit his "friends" in the Soviet Union. They turned out to be Mikhail Gorbachev and his senior advisers at the Kremlin.

GLC set off on its four-volume series keyed to détente after DC pencil artist Joe Staton returned from a trip to the Soviet Union with a pile of photographs and a wealth of personal impressions. GLC editor Andy Helfer wrote a landmark editor's note in the January 1987 issue of the corps' comic, in which he described his reaction to Staton's snapshots and experience: "The picture [Staton] painted wasn't exactly a pretty one . . . but from it emerged an image of Soviet Russian society that seemed to strike ye old editor as being poor, rather than oppressed."

That issue of the corps' comic had as cover art one of the Green Lanterns boldly leading the armed masses forward. Drawn in the style of the giant billboards so prevalent in socialist nations, the superhero held aloft a red banner that proclaimed: "Forward, Proletarian Superhero!"

No, the series did not go on to praise the Communist heartland—the Soviets used the powers of the GLC members who visited that nation to clone a "Red" superhero—but it did raise the idea of moral equivalence to new heights. Each issue of the series, say comic book distributors in New York City, sold out very quickly.

Stressing the new link between comics and politics even more forcefully, the February 1987 issue of DC's *Blue Beetle* had President Reagan outlawing superheroes, because dastardly villains had begun impersonating the superior good guys and committing crimes in their disguises.

Reagan and Gorbachev were joined —literally—in the persona of yet another superhero. This neurotic creation talked to himself. His two personalities were named Ronnie and Mikhail.

At the end of one issue of Marvel Comics' *Merc*, the star-mercenary, Mark Hazard, who has just thwarted an attempt on the life of an Israeli diplomat by Arab terrorists, goes to a movie—*Rambo*. Despite the fact that he is a mercenary, and despite the fact that Hazard has (cynically) fought alongside freedom fighters in Central America, he says to himself: "First I shoot the projectionist. Then I burn the prints. Stallone must be found before he kills again."

There was a time when comic book superheroes fought either for the United States and against totalitarian nations, for the people of one city against archcriminals, or for Earth against alien invaders. Now they fight among themselves, with their own troubled "darker" sides, or against such targets as toxic waste dumpers, religious cults, drug traffickers, and self-appointed urban crime patrols.

Though juveniles have traditionally been the prime readers—and purchasers—of comic books, these days most are clearly aimed at an older audience. In a note attached to *Word Warriors*, an independently produced special issue magazine about illiteracy, DC Comics' senior editor/director of development Mike Gold says: "Comic book storytelling has matured at a time when the average novel, movie and television show has devolved to meet the desires of a less sophisticated audience."

The push into the world of adult fantasy reading (setting aside the satirical monthlies *Mad* and *Cracked*) of the comic book genre came in the late 1960's and early 70's, when "hippy" illustrators such as R. Crumb and Ralph Bakshi penned the drug-and-sex adventures of, respectively, Mr. Natural and Fritz the Cat. Bakshi today is responsible for CBS-TV's *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse*. Episodes of that Saturday morning "kids" show have attacked capitalism, veered close to pornography, and allegedly sympathized with cocaine use.

Another significant change in the genre has been the appearance in America of book-length comics on a single theme. Though such illustrated books have been popular in countries such as France and Japan for decades, the release of Art Spiegelman's full-length cartoon novel, *Maus*, just two years ago vaulted American comics into a new dimension. More than 100,000 copies of this book about the Holocaust, where the Nazis are cats and the Jews are mice, have been sold, and *Maus* was nominated for an award from the National Book Critics Circle.

Though most American kids have grown up reading some kind of comic book, reading them now has become an adult pastime, and clearly less innocent. As DC Comics' Gold put it in 1987, comic books "are on the cutting edge of sophisticated storytelling. . . . A great many comics test out at higher reading levels than many novels. The grand joke is that, today, reading comic books is a true sign of literacy."

Evans Johnson is national editor for The New York City Tribune.

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